

A Far-Reaching Faith

1/31/2021

Message 5

Exodus Series

Exodus 13:19 (CSB)

¹⁹ Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, because Joseph had made the Israelites swear a solemn oath, saying, "God will certainly come to your aid; then you must take my bones with you from this place."

Genesis 50:25–26 (CSB)

²⁵ So Joseph made the sons of Israel take an oath: "When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here."

²⁶ Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

Joshua 24:32 (CSB)

³² Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

Hebrews 11:22 (CSB)

²² By faith Joseph, as he was nearing the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions concerning his bones.

[Introduction: Joseph had made a long-standing Request.](#)

A. Over 400 years before, Joseph had been sold into slavery and ended up in Egypt.

1. What started as a terrible situation ended up in the salvation of God's people.

2. As Joseph faithfully served those around him, he kept getting promoted.

a. God knows how to promote people in challenging places.

b. God rewards faithfulness, no matter where that faithfulness is applied.

3. After many years of struggles and setbacks, Joseph ends up working for Pharaoh as his second in command.

a. No longer a slave in Egypt, he is now in command of Egypt.

b. During a great and terrible famine, Joseph is reconciled back to his family and saves them from the famine.

c. In return, Pharaoh invites Joseph's family to possess the land of Goshen, where they are to live.

4. Of course, we now know the Pharaoh's turned on Israel and made them slaves.

a. But that doesn't mean that their coming to Egypt was without purpose.

b. When God directs your path, He uses places like Egypt and Midian and the Wilderness to teach us what we wouldn't learn elsewhere.

c. I believe that there are lessons for us and our future to learn from our country's present situation if we will pay attention.

d. Bumps in the road are part of the journey.

B. Joseph ended up in a great situation.

1. He had become wealthy in Egypt.

2. His wife was Egyptian, and his kids were raised in an Egyptian palace.

3. Joseph was able to save his family and see the visions that he had as a teenager 100 years before fulfilled.

C. But Joseph held on to a greater promise.

1. God had told Abraham that after 400 years in a foreign land, his family would inherit a Promised Land.

2. This promise was passed down from Abraham to Isaac and to Joseph's dad, Jacob.

D. **Joseph knew that his people were destined for a better place.**

1. Therefore, at his death bed, Joseph made his descendants promise:

2. When deliverance comes, do not leave me in Egypt.

1. What did it matter?

A. Let's be honest, Joseph would not have known.

1. He was dead.

2. Why did it matter to Joseph, then to Moses, and then Joshua to honor Joseph's oath?

B. **First, Joseph's request was an act of faith.**

1. Joseph TRUSTED God.

2. He trusted that what God had promised would come true.

3. Joseph trusted the character of God.

a. The same God that gave visions to him as a young man was the same God who would keep his promise to an old man.

b. So Joseph responded in faith.

c. He believed God's Word so much that he made plans for his bones.

4. To what extent do you believe God's Word?

5. To what extent do you TRUST God?

C. Second, this passage demonstrates that **Moses and Joshua responded in obedience.**

1. Moses had never met Joseph.
2. It was an inconvenience for someone to carry Joseph's mummified body for 40 years.
 - a. We do not know the details.
 - b. Did one person or family carry this coffin the whole time?
 - c. Did they pass Joseph around like a weird version of hot potato?
3. It was an inconvenience for someone to carry Joseph into the Promised Land.
4. But obedience is not about convenience.
 - a. **When God calls you to something, He does not take your convenience into account.**
 - b. God isn't as concerned about your happiness as he is about your holiness.
 - c. And there is no holiness without obedience
5. **There is no faith without obedience.**
6. **You can't walk by faith if you won't step in obedience.**

D. **Third, Moses and Joshua responded with honor.**

1. Honor, as a verb, can mean "to regard with great respect" and to "fulfill an obligation."
 - a. Both definitions fit this example.
 - b. The nation of Israel honored Joseph and fulfilled the obligation their forefathers had made.
2. **There is no faith and no miracles where honor is absent.**

a. Jesus could do no miracles in Nazareth because there was no honor there. Mark 6:4

b. **God does not work where He is not honored.**

3. Joseph, by faith, knew that God would honor His word and covenant.

a. Joseph knew that God would lead his people to the land that He had promised them.

b. So Joseph expected his descendants to honor God by honoring his request.

2. Something is missing in our faith today.

A. We are called to be a people of faith.

1. **When faith is misplaced, it gives way to fear.**

2. Joseph and Moses give us a great example of great faith.

a. **By faith, Joseph told his people to carry out his bones.**

b. **By faith, Moses picked them up and carried them.**

c. **By faith, they both believed that God would fulfill His promise to Abraham.**

3. The New Testament uses this example to illustrate what faith in God looks like.

a. What many in America is practicing isn't faith.

b. **Let me share with you a couple of examples of what faith is not.**

B. **Faith is not wishful/positive thinking.**

1. Faith must depend upon the expressed Word and Will of God.

2. *We can't pray for something that is not God's will.*

a. Faith is not a wish.

b. God is not some magical genie who grants our wishes if we pray hard enough.

3. Faith is the appropriation of what God has promised us.

a. In other words, our faith begins with what God has said.

b. We can pray for healing because the promise to heal comes from God.

c. We can pray for provision and protection because those promises are based upon God's word.

d. We can pray "thy Kingdom come" because that originated with God.

4. Joseph could command his descendants to take him to a promised land because he believed that God would keep His word.

a. As we pray and act in faith, we must make sure that we are not basing our faith on wishful thinking.

b. There are thousands of books and philosophies that teach that all you have to do is have right thinking.

1. The philosopher Descartes once said, "I think therefore I am," but he was not expressing faith in God but himself.

2. The best advice I can give you to help you grow in your faith is to know the Word of God.

3. When we pray based upon God's revealed promises, we can't go wrong.

C. Faith is not human-focused.

1. Next weekend, many people will have "faith" that Patrick Mahomes will be up to the task of winning the Super Bowl.

a. But that is not what Scripture is calling us to.

b. Faith is not focused upon humans but in Jesus.

c. Jesus is the only one who will not disappoint.

2. Many people are placing their faith in prophets, TV personalities, YouTubers, presidents and policies.

a. We are placing our faith in people and places and policies and when events come to pass that are contrary to what we had prayed for, we become discouraged.

b. Faith placed in anyone other than Jesus will disappoint.

3. Joseph's faith was not in personalities or personal desires.

a. Joseph had based his claim on God's expressed word, a word given to Abraham and passed down to Isaac and then to Jacob and fulfilled in Moses.

b. When we base our faith on the solid rock of Jesus, we will not fail.

c. Nothing else is as stable as Jesus.

1. The best of people, whether they be pastors, or prophets, or parents, are fallible.

2. If you trust in people long enough, they will disappoint.

3. But when we base our life, our prayers, and our faith on the Promises of God, we won't fail.

4. Our prayers may not be answered in this lifetime, but they will be answered.

D. True faith does not misappropriate what God has promised.

1. Earlier, I explained that faith is the appropriation of what God has promised.

2. But when you wrongfully apply what God has promised, you misappropriate God's Word.

a. This is not faith.

b. At best, it is ignorance.

- c. At worst, it is heresy.
- d. Every time, this is dangerous.

3. We have a responsibility to know what God's Word said and promised in context before we ever apply it to our situation.

3. Too often, our faith is short-sighted.

A. Joseph dreamed of experiencing the Exodus, even if it was in death.

- 1. He knew that deliverance would not happen in his lifetime or his children's lifetime.
- 2. But he wasn't willing to let a little thing like death keep him from his inheritance.

B. Joseph wanted to be buried with his inheritance.

Joshua 24:32 (CSB)

³²Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

- 1. I had to look this up.
- 2. In Genesis 33:18-20, we are told that Jacob (Joseph's father) bought some land and built a house in Shechem and it was there that Jacob set up an altar to the God of Israel.
- 3. But Jacob and his family did not get to stay there.
 - a. in Genesis 34, some bad stuff happened with Jacob's family.
 - b. Jacob was forced to leave that place and return to Bethel.
 - c. It was in Bethel that Joseph had the dreams that led to him being sold into slavery.
 - d. But it was in Shechem that Joseph was born and spent part of his childhood.

e. It was from nearby Shechem that Joseph was deceived by his brothers and sold to Egypt.

C. **Yet, Joseph never forgot that his inheritance was not in Egypt.**

1. **A grave in the Promised Land is better than a tomb in Egypt.**

2. Joseph prospered in Egypt.

3. Joseph was led by God in Egypt.

4. But Joseph dreamed of his inheritance.

a. Joseph knew where his inheritance was.

b. He knew that his inheritance had been paid for long ago.

c. And 400 years after his death, before Moses could leave Egypt, went to where Joseph was buried, delivered him from his tomb, carried him to his destiny.

4. **Some of us are living like our destiny is in Egypt.**

A. Some of us are living like we have no inheritance.

1. We are practicing a faith that goes nowhere.

2. We are practicing a faith with no eternity in mind.

a. A faith that does not result in lost people saved.

b. Or sick people healed.

c. Or dead people raised.

3. A faith that cannot look past our present struggles and see a victorious Jesus.

B. Joseph knew that difficult days were coming.

1. But he hinged his faith not upon slavery but deliverance.

2. Joseph's faith was rooted in God and not in Pharaoh.

C. Christians are caught between two worlds.

1. The Apostle Paul described this in Philippians 3:12-21

Philippians 3:12–21 (CSB)

¹²Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, ¹⁴I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you. ¹⁶In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. ¹⁷Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; and they are focused on earthly things, ²⁰**Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.**

2. A far-reaching faith looks past our stomachs, our own glory, earthly things, and present enemies.

3. A far-reaching faith eagerly waits for a Savior from heaven.

4. A far-reaching faith looks past our current defeat and toward Jesus' future victory.

Closing: How is your faith?

A. More than likely, we waver somewhere between a faith like Joseph and a faith like Israel.

1. Israel, as we will see, was always throwing up her hands and wanting to quit.

2. Joseph saw a future where God's Promise was fulfilled and carried that till his death and beyond.

3. More than likely, you are in the middle.

B. You aren't exactly ready to quit everything and hide under a rock.

1. But you feel the anxiety and oppression and the nagging thoughts that wonder "What if..."

2. What if...

a. God doesn't come through for me in my situation?

b. What the world says is right and I am wrong?

c. What if things get hard: Can I make it?

C. For the many of us struggling in this in-between, I want to pray for us this morning.

1. I want to pray that God will strengthen our faith.

2. I want to pray that we will practice a far-reaching faith.

3. A faith that results in:

a. An increasingly redeemed Licking and surrounding area.

b. People saved and delivered.

c. A Nation that experiences revival.

4. If you want prayer for God to increase your faith, would you join me this morning across the front?