



Sermon Title: Pastoral Passages week 4

Sermon Title: *God's Perfect Timing*

Date: 7/31/2022

Genesis 48:13-22

As we dig through this passage and talk about Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh, we'll be able to:

Big Idea: Realize that everything will come to light in God's time.

To fully embrace this through everything that we may experience and to make this a part of our everyday thinking, we need to look at three aspects of this scripture that formulate this idea:

1. God's ways transcend cultural norms

Genesis 48:13-16

The first aspect deals with Jacob's blessing of both of Joseph's sons. When the scripture says that Jacob blessed Joseph, he didn't do it directly, but he did it indirectly through his sons. In this culture, the firstborn son was entitled to a great blessing from his father. This is what the custom was. The firstborn son received more than what the other son received. It's not who was born first but who God ordained to receive that blessing.

The way that we see this is just simply by looking through the Abrahamic lineage. Of Abraham's sons, Isaac was the true heir of the Abrahamic covenant and received a blessing, even though Ishmael was older. Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was older, but Jacob received the birthright. Jacob's son, Joseph, received favor from him, even though he had multiple other sons that were older than Joseph was. And now, we see Jacob blessing Ephraim over Manasseh, the younger son, to receive the right hand of blessing.

God does not think or act the way that we do. And He certainly doesn't abide by what the cultural standard is during any period. **Isaiah 55:8-9**

2. Unexpected outcomes are not divine mistakes

Genesis 48:17-18

Now we get to see Joseph's response to what Jacob has done. Joseph is beside himself. He knew that his firstborn son was supposed to receive this blessing. Instead, it goes to his second-born son. He thought Jacob had made a mistake.

How many times have you gone through a tough situation and thought, "This isn't the way this is supposed to be! There are a few points in scripture where we can see different qualities of God and conclude that He's incapable of making mistakes! **Numbers 23:19, Psalm 147:5.**

Just because something is unexpected does not mean that God made a mistake. Just because Joseph was not expecting Jacob to bless Ephraim over Manasseh does not mean that Jacob made a mistake. God is working through all of it. We don't always understand God's ways, and that's ok! That's where the realization of that and true trust come into the picture.

3. Trust God to work out His plan

Genesis 48:19-20

Here is where we see Jacob's reaction to what Joseph says to him. Jacob knew exactly what he was doing when he blessed Ephraim over Manasseh. Remember, Jacob is really old at this point and practically on his death bed. But Jacob knew what he was doing. He appealed to the will of God. But... what really became of Ephraim after this? Well, let's look:

- One of the twelve tribes of Israel, along with Manasseh
- In the book of Numbers, it says that Ephraim's tribe grew to be greater in number than his brother Manasseh's: 40,500 to 32,200. (Numbers 1:33-35)
- A city was named after Ephraim (2 Samuel 13:23)
- His name was used for a gate in Jerusalem (2 Kings 14:13)
- A forest was also named after him (2 Samuel 18:6)

Do you get the picture here? Ephraim became that great nation, and his name is even used in the Old Testament to refer to the 10 tribes that make up Israel's Northern Kingdom. We see that God's blessing is one of fruitfulness. Even though the culture wouldn't have understood why Jacob did what he did. Even though Joseph himself didn't understand why Jacob did what he did. God's blessing over Ephraim, which He appointed Jacob to give, came to fruition. Whatever we're going through now, God is able to make those sufferings work together for our good and His good. **Romans 8:28.** It's all part of His plan, and it all comes together in his time, the same way that blessing over Ephraim's life did. We may not understand everything circumstance that we encounter, like Joseph. However, in the same way that he did, we need to learn to trust our Father.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Has someone ever prayed a blessing over you or your family? Describe the experience.**
- **Why was it such a big deal that the blessing was “backwards”? Explain the cultural viewpoint and the biblical viewpoint.**
- **Find and discuss other examples in the Bible when the first became last, and address how vital the concept is in God’s kingdom.**
- **Have you ever been denied something that you knew for sure should rightfully be yours? How did you respond?**
- **Describe a time when God’s timing came before you were expecting it, perhaps even before you knew that you needed it. Do the same for a time when God’s timing matched your line of thinking and then for a time when God’s timing was later than you desired.**