Dreams From The Deathbed — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 48:1–49:28 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, November 17, 2024 · *Living The Dream*

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If you have your Bible, you can open it to Genesis chapter forty eight. We're going to be in Genesis chapter forty eight and forty-nine this morning and we're getting eerily close to the end of the book of Genesis, so we'll have one more sermon next week and then we're going to call it good on Genesis, at least for the time being. It's been a fantastic journey for myself. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm going to grieve a little when the book is over.

And as all good stories do, the ending is resolving a lot of the things that have been left unresolved in the story of Genesis up to this point. And today we're at the ending of the last patriarch in the book of Genesis, which is a book of patriarchs, and that is the life of Jacob. You got the book of beginnings with the beginning of the creation of the world, but then you've got the choosing of Abraham, and he is the father of the faith. Abraham on down to Isaac, on down to Jacob, and at the end of Jacob's life, he does a handful of things that are worthy of note for us this morning.

And as I was thinking about this sermon, I was in my mind taken back to a conversation I had with our pastor emeritus at this church, his name is David Kayson. If you're new to Broadview, he pastored Broadview for 38 years. And right when I became senior pastor around 2013 or 14, we were doing a whole lot of funerals together. We still do funerals together, but we were doing a lot of them at that time. And we were coming to the graveside of a funeral for a person that I would say was untimely in their death.

They felt like they were too young to die. And I remember talking to Pastor David and saying, you know, death is crazy how it really sobers you up to what's most important in life. Because I was kind of thinking about, well what if my wife died and all those things. And he said something at the time I thought it was a little bit grotesque, but the more I think about it, the wiser it is. And he said, you know, Wes, as a young man. A young father and a young husband, you should actually think about the death of your spouse and the death of your children on a pretty regular basis.

You should go there in your mind and in your heart and feel that grief so that should it ever happen, on one hand you're not caught off guard, but even if it doesn't happen going there in your mind will clarify for you things that are most important in life and really minimize some things that maybe feel important but at the end of the day are not. And like most things Pastor David says it is a really wise thing to say. And over the last several years, since hearing that encouragement, I've done that.

And it does. It sobers you up, it clarifies what's important, it minimizes what isn't. And it's exactly what scripture encourages God's people to do. Moses sang a song that got recorded in Psalm 90, and in Psalm chapter 90 he says, teach us, I think it's chapter 90, verse 12, teach us to number our days carefully. Why? So that we can develop hearts of wisdom. And such it is in the case of Jacob and his deathbed perspective. And I would say to you and I this morning, we can't like jump into our deathbed.

Although wouldn't that be crazy if you could do that like, remember Ebenezer Scrooge, ghost of Christmas past. Like if you have the opportunity to be Ebenezer Scrooge and jump into your deathbed, would you take it? Imagine the things that you would be able to see. Imagine the clarity with which you would be able to live your life today. Even though we can't necessarily do that, I think we can in our mind's eye approach our deathbed and begin to see things from that vantage point that we would not see any other place.

If you're taking notes, you begin to see truths more clearly from the deathbed than you do with any other perspective. Certain truths are more clearly seen with a deathbed perspective. So with that in mind, let's pick it up in chapter 48, verse 1. Again, this is Jacob's death. He's in Egypt, had been delivered from starvation and death in Canaan. Joseph relocated them. And he's about to die, and he calls in Joseph. Because he knows his time is near. So sometime after this, Joseph was told, Your father is weaker. So he set out with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

And when Jacob was told, Your son Joseph has come to you, Israel summoned his strength, and he sat up in bed. If you've ever watched someone as they die, sometimes if it's a slower death you have this rallying point. And this is Jacob getting to his rallying point. He's got his two grandsons in the room, Ephraim and Manasseh. Manasseh was the firstborn, Ephraim was the secondborn. Both of these boys were not Jewish, they were Egyptian because they were born to Joseph after he had married a woman in Egypt, actually a priestess's daughter named Asenath.

And they had two children, and these two children probably spent their best years with grandpa, right? They're probably 17 to 22, somewhere in that range. I don't know if you've ever been 17 to 22, but your granddad's like your superhero at that age, because he can do no wrong. And you never spend enough time with him to get, you know, annoyed by him, but you spend just enough time to be amazed by him. If you had a good granddad, I think that's

probably what happened with these boys. And so they are probably about to grieve deeply the death of their grandfather.

And Joseph and Jacob, I'm sure, had a very difficult time because they had spent the vast majority of their days separated from each other. If you're unfamiliar with the story, and some of you may be, Joseph was dad's favorite, and as a result of that, Joseph's brothers were going to kill him, but instead sold him into slavery, and lied to their father, saying Joseph had been torn in half by a wild animal. So Jacob had spent the vast majority of his life grieving his son's death, the son that he loved more than any of the others.

And it wasn't until the famine struck and Joseph, unbeknownst to them, had been promoted to second in command in Egypt, where he saved his family from their starvation and death. And not only did that, but gave them a cushy land and a cushy job in Egypt, they're in the land of Goshen. So their best years have probably been these last 17 years. But even those years are coming to an end, and he knows he's about to die. So he does what most old men do when they're about to die, and that is he begins to tell stories.

Come and let your granddad Jacob tell you. If you want to use that accent, you can. I'm not going to do it the whole time. As much as I want to, as much as I want to. Calls them all around, and Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty, now by the way, if you're taking notes, he's going to see things, three things. He's going to look at his, he's going to remember his past differently. He's going to respond to the present differently, and he's going to have God reveal things about the future that he wouldn't otherwise be able to see.

So first he's remembering his past differently. So a deathbed perspective changes how you remember the past. So picking it up in verse 3, Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me. And he said to me, I will make you fruitful and numerous. I will make many nations come from you, and I will give this land as a permanent possession to your future descendants. Now before we keep reading, do you guys remember when God appeared to Jacob at Luz? If you've been traveling along, maybe you do.

It was right after Jacob had deceived his own father and stolen his brother Esau's blessing from him and Esau was so upset about it that he said, as soon as my dad dies, I'm going to kill my little brother. And so Jacob's mom, who's, you know, Jacob was a mama's boy. Jacob's mom says, Jacob, you got to get out of here. What we've done is terrible. Go to Uncle Laban's house. Maybe you'll be delivered from your brother's wrath. And it was as he was on his way to Laban's house, all by himself.

He was not a super strong man's man. He was lonely, he was afraid, he was probably feeling guilt because of the terrible things that he had done. And it was in that moment that God appeared to him at Luz and said, God didn't appear to him to rebuke him. God appeared to

him to bless him. Even though he had done all that sin, and even though he was totally unworthy, God said, the covenant that I made with Abraham, your grandfather, and the covenant that I made with Isaac, your father, I am going to make with you, even though you don't deserve it.

And I think what Jacob is doing is he's looking back at the highlights of his life, namely the best moment of his life. When God pursued him, chased him, and chose him for this blessing, even though he was totally undeserving. So he's saying, despite all my sin, the Lord still chose me. And that's what drives verse 5, where he says, if God has chosen me by his amazing grace, even though I didn't deserve it. I'm going to choose your two sons to be adopted into my family, just like God adopted me into His.

So your two sons born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, those sons are now mine. In other words, I'm adopting them. They're going to get my inheritance, which was massive, by the way. Ephraim and Manasseh belong to me just as Reuben and Simeon do. In other words, I'm not going to treat them like the maidservant's kids, I'm treating them like the firstborn and the secondborn of my first wife. They have preeminence in my house. And then children born to you after them will be yours and will be recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance.

So God chose me by grace. I'm choosing you by grace. This is the power of adoption. This is why adoption is so beautiful. It's why those of you who've ever adopted children or ever will adopt children, it's one of the most significant acts of gospeling, if I can use that term, that has ever been created because you take what God has done for us in Christ and you give that to another child, even though they weren't biologically, legally rightful heirs of the inheritance of your family, you make them so because of your selection and your grace.

So even though I was a terrible man, even though in my sin God chose me, and then after God chose me, I continued to sin. Despite all of that, he chose me, and then he goes to his lowest moment after that and he talks about his wife Rachel in verse seven. When I was returning from Paddan to my sorrow, Rachel died along the way, in some distance from Ephrath in the land of Canaan, I buried her there along the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. So what I think he's doing is going from the best moment of his life to the lowest moment of his life, which was the death of Rachel.

Rachel is the woman he loved more than any other woman. He worked seven years for free just so he could have Rachel. And then when Uncle Laban tricked him and gave him lazy-eyed Leah instead, he still worked another seven years just so he could have Rachel. And loved her so deeply all the way to the very end. When she died, he was devastated. Life wasn't even worth living. And in that moment, the Lord comforted him. And I think what he's doing from this deathbed is he's looking back at all of that past sorrow, and he's saying, even in my greatest season of sorrow, the Lord and his comfort was sufficient.

The Lord is my comforter. The Lord is the God who chose me despite all my sin. And then I think as a summary statement, from the mountain high to the valley low, in every season, God has kept me. He saw Joseph's sons and when Israel saw Joseph's sons in verse 8, he said, who are these? It's kind of interesting because he just knew who they were earlier. So I don't know if this was the same time or a different time, but maybe he had dementia or some kind of forgetfulness.

Joseph said to his father, these are my sons. You know, God has given me these two boys while I've been here in Egypt. And so Israel said, well bring them to me and I'm going to bless them. And he had to bring them real close because his eyesight was poor because of his old age, and he could hardly see. But Joseph brought them to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And then Israel said to Joseph, I never expected to see your face again, but now God has even let me see your offspring.

And then Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed his face to the ground. The last thing I think he sees as he reflects on the past is he looks at all of his suffering and all of the low points of his life when he said to his sons, I'm inconsolable. My gray hairs are going down to Sheol. In other words, I'd rather die than live. He looks back at his actual deathbed and he says, I'm so glad God kept me. I'm so glad God preserved me and sustained me and enabled me to persevere to this point because at this point not only has he given me what I never thought I'd have, which is to see your face again, but I even get to see the face of your children as well.

God has been so good to me. We sing that song, I will sing of the goodness of God. This is Jacob singing, God is so good to me. He chose me despite all my sin. He comforted me in all of my sorrow. And through every season of suffering, he kept me. And preserved me. And then he looks to his present opportunity and he does something that is way out of the ordinary. So not only does it change the way he reflected on the past, it also changes the way he responds in the present.

So pick it up in verse 13. Then Joseph took them both, with his right hand on Ephraim toward Israel's left, and with his left hand Manasseh toward Israel's right. Now he's doing that because Manasseh is the oldest, so he wants him to receive the right hand of blessing. He brought them to Israel, but Israel stretched out his hand and he put it on the head of Ephraim. In other words, the right hand's going on the secondborn. And then crossing his hands, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, and Manasseh was the firstborn.

So it's backwards. And then he blessed Joseph and he said, the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day. The angel who has redeemed me from all harm, may he bless these boys, and may they be called by my name, and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. And may they grow to be numerous within the land. Notice what he's doing. He's taking these Egyptian, Gentile, non-

Jewish boys who had no legal right into the covenant of grace, and he's saying, may God bring these boys in and bless them, just as he's blessed Abraham and Isaac and me as fathers of the faith.

And then when Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand, and I'm amazed that Joseph wasn't like bawling, all he could say is, Dad, you blind bat, switch your hands. When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, he thought it was a mistake, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's. And Joseph said to his father, not this way, my father, this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head. But his father refused, and he said, I know, my son.

I know. He too will become a tribe, and he too will be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he. And his offspring will become a populous nation. And so he blessed them that day, putting Ephraim before Manasseh when he said, the nation, Israel will invoke blessings by you, saying, may God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh. Now could you imagine if you were Joseph in that moment what you would be thinking? Or if you were Manasseh, right, you'd be a little you'd be a little torqued. You know, I am a firstborn.

I know what it's like. But back then the firstborn got all the extra money. He got like two-thirds of the inheritance instead of like however evenly split like we do it in the West. We're so fair as Americans. They didn't do that back then. One kid got most of the stuff and everybody else worked for that kid. So he'd probably been told by his dad, you're going to be very responsible son. With great power comes great responsibility. You need to manage that responsibility and be good stewards. Your brothers are going to look up to you and so all his life Manasseh's been charged for this moment.

And then he gets word, I'm going to be a partaker of God's covenant. I mean the covenant of grace. Whoo, let's go. I'm going to be like Reuben. I'm not only going to get my dad's inheritance, I'm going to get granddad's inheritance, and he's got even cooler cars and better camels. And then right at the last minute, phoom, switches. No, Manasseh, you don't get it. Ephraim does. What do you think Ephraim would have thought? And yet, even though all that's complicated and messy and nuanced, and if you put yourself in the family dynamics, it's challenging, Jacob sees something in the present from his deathbed.

I don't think he would see any other way. And Jacob should know better because Jacob was the secondborn. He was the one who received that blessing. But he lived a lot of his life captivated by the cultural precedence of his day, even though God had reminded him over and over again, I don't play by the culture's rules. The precedents of the culture are not coloring lines for me. I'm not restricted by them. Now Jacob in his deathbed is able to say, God is going to do it again. He is going to choose the second.

He's going to choose the unlikely. He's going to choose the rejected. And I'm going to join him in that promise. So the first thing that he does from his deathbed about his present that's different is he esteems God's purpose over cultural precedent. And that's the best way I know how to say it because the precedent of the culture was the firstborn gets the goods. And now he's just like his father and grandfather saying, even though that's what everybody else does, that's not how God's people work. We're going to choose the small things of the world, the weak things of the world, the despised things of the world, and let God prove Himself faithful so that he gets all the glory.

And then after that, he gives Joseph a word. After probably making him angry, he says, oh, I'm not finished. Israel then said to Joseph, look, I'm about to die, but God's going to be with you. Notice this phrase, and he's going to bring you back to the land of your fathers. So over and above what I'm giving your brothers, I'm giving you the one mountain slope that I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow. Now where does Joseph live now? In Egypt, how long did Joseph live in Canaan?

Seventeen years. Then he got sold into Egyptian slavery. He spent most of his adult life in Egypt. He's the second in command. He is the man in Egypt. He is so loved in Egypt that when he dies, Egypt mourns for seventy days, which is only two days short of what they mourn for the Pharaoh. So they probably like Joseph even more than the Pharaoh, but they technically couldn't show that. This just goes to show he had all the influence, he had all the money, he had all the prestige, he could do whatever he wanted, have whatever he wanted, live wherever he wanted, and now Jacob is saying, I need you to give all of this up.

And go back to the land of promise, even though it's not ours yet. Even though we haven't inherited the promised land, I'm going to give you this mountain slope. I'm going to give you the one little slice that we have, because this is God's will for your life. So Joseph had to prioritize God's promise over his cultural or his personal preference. And I'm sure Jacob had to prioritize the promise of God over his personal preference because I'm sure his preference was that his son would die rich and blessed and happy and all kinds of kids, but he says, no, God is doing something else.

And because I'm looking at my circumstances from the perspective of a deathbed, I'm beginning to notice how God works ways that are different than our ways. So we've got to reject the cultural precedent and we've got to put his promise above our preferences. We can't say, well, I've never done it that way before, so it must not be God, or it's going to be costly and disruptive, therefore it can't be from the Lord. No, when you look at life from your deathbed, you'll see it in a different way.

So he looks at his past different, he remembers the past differently, reacts to the present differently. And then the last thing he does is he, from his deathbed, is able to see things from the future that he had never seen before. So God reveals things about the future from

his deathbed that he previously couldn't see. And to be honest, this should be its own sermon, so I got to preach it really fast. And to be even more honest. If this, what I'm about to share, was its own sermon, it would probably bore you to death because we're going to go through all of these names and it's going to be grinding and you're going to be bored and you're going to I don't know what you're going to do.

But I just need you to hang with me, okay? Because what Jacob is about to do is extremely important. He's going to speak these prophetic words over his children that are themselves prophetic. They end up fleshing themselves out in history. And all of them point to a central truth that I think will prepare our hearts for the Lord's Supper. Okay, so will you hang with me? Will you stick with me? Do you guys remember the twelve sons of Jacob? It's been a long time, I know. Some of you are new to the Bible.

You don't know who these are. I called this sermon Jerry Springer on steroids, but I didn't actually call it that because that would be inappropriate. I bet I get a lot of views on YouTube. But we didn't do that. This is the chart of his twelve sons. Abraham was a patriarch. Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac and Rebekah got married. They had Jacob and Esau. Jacob, like I said earlier, he went up north to Uncle Laban's house. He saw Rachel. Ooh, ooh, I love her. She's so pretty. I'll work seven years for free.

And at the end of the seven years he got lazy eyed Leah and he's like, you tricked me. And he's like, well, it's our cultural precedent. And so Jacob was like, well, I'll work another seven years. Just give me Rachel. So he says, okay, here's Rachel. Seven days went by, then he got Rachel. So Jacob, Rachel, Leah, all get in the same house, plus Rachel's maidservant, who was her maidservant when she was living with her dad, Laban, and Leah's maidservant, Laban was a pretty wealthy dude.

I wouldn't say they're slaves necessarily, but they were loyal to that person. And so they are living in the house. You got four women in the house and one man, and they start having crazy happen. Leah wanted the love of her husband, but she couldn't have it because Jacob loved Rachel, not Leah. Rachel wanted children, but she couldn't have them. But her sister was having children like nobody's business. She was popping out babies like it's going out of style. She had one baby, then another baby, then another baby, and with each baby she had she named them names that basically conveyed the idea, I wish my husband would love me.

I wish my husband would see me. I wish my husband would care for me. And all three of those sons had names that hearkened to that basic idea. But by the time she had her fourth child, she names him praise, I think, because it's her way of saying I don't need my husband's love to be happy. All I need is the love of God, and I have his love, and so I'm going to praise his name. And she's kind of liberated from the bondage of that idolatry of her husband once she has Judah.

Well after she has Judah, Rachel is so jealous she can't stand it. She sees like, well if I can't have babies. My servant's going to have babies. So she says, servant, go sleep with my husband. And so she's like, well, okay. So they have two babies, one named Dan, one named Naphtali. Well, when Rachel's maidservant starts having babies, Leah's like, well, my servant can have babies. So she says, go sleep with my husband. And Zilpah's like, well. Okay, here we go. So she has two babies, and then after she has those two babies, Leah has more babies, Issachar and Zebulun, and then Rachel's finally like, I guess I'm never going to have babies.

All the other people having babies and she finally surrenders to God and says, God, I guess if you don't want me to have babies, I won't have babies. It's fine. I love you. I trust you. I'll do whatever you say. And then she has a baby named Joseph. And then way later, she has another baby named Benjamin. Okay, has everybody got the lay of the land? You guys remember? Now remember this order because this order is going to get switched up on us with these prophecies. Now we got to listen fast.

The first prophecy is given to Reuben. Who's Reuben? You already forgot. Yeah, he's a firstborn, firstborn son of Leah. Look what he says. Reuben, you are my firstborn. My strength, the first fruits of my virility. It's a kind of gross thing to say to your son. Excelling in prominence, excelling in power. I'm sure he was loving this, but then he turns the tide. And you're turbulent as water. You will not excel because you got into your father's bed and you defiled it. He got into my bed.

Now, if you don't know the story, after Rachel died Reuben went and slept with Rachel's maidservant. We don't know why, we aren't told why, but my assumption is he slept with Bilhah. Because he knew Jacob loved Rachel the most, so he's going to love the maidservant second most. But I don't want him to love the maidservant. I want him to love my mom, Leah. So I'm going to go and defile Bilhah and sleep with her. And I don't know if it was consensual or not. It kind of leans that it probably wasn't.

And it says in that passage that Jacob knew about Reuben's act, but it never says he called him on the carpet. He never confronts him. All we see is Reuben try to earn his dad's love every step of the way after that moment. Reuben was the one who tried to rescue Joseph so that maybe Dad'll love me and I'll be back in my place of prominence. Reuben was the one that when they came back from Egypt and they had to go back to Egypt to get more grain, but Joseph said no, or I'm sorry, Jacob said no because he didn't want to let go of Benjamin.

Reuben said, well, if I don't come back, you can kill my grandkids. Which I don't know how that's helpful, but he was trying to get his father's affection, his love. And he couldn't get it. And I don't know if he had never broached the topic before. Maybe it was an open secret. Somebody slept with her. We know somebody slept with her, but nobody knew. And now finally, at the last moment, he calls him on the carpet and he says, you did it. And I know you did it. You defiled your father's bed, and as a result, you're not going to be successful.

You're like the shifting wind, you are like shifting water. You have no integrity. He defiled my bed. And then he turns to the other two boys who had a rebuke coming. Simeon and Levi. You guys remember Simeon and Levi? They were the ones who killed all the men in Shechem. Lying to them, if you'll all get circumcised, then Hamor can have our sister Dinah, even though he raped her. So they all get circumcised and after that they butcher the whole city. So he says of Simeon and Levi, their knives are vicious weapons. May I never enter their council, may I never join their assembly.

For in their anger they kill men, and on a whim they hamstring oxen, which is really kind of sick, right? Torturing animals just for the fun of it. If you have a kid that tortures animals for the fun of it, you need to keep an eye on that kid. Their anger is cursed for it is strong, and their fury for it is cruel. I will disperse them throughout Jacob and scatter them throughout all of Israel. Now if you notice here, Simeon is down here, but he doesn't have any land because Simeon was scattered all throughout the land of Judah.

He never gets any land inheritance because of his sin. Levi also doesn't have any land, but he's not listed anywhere because what happens to the tribe of Levi is they become the priesthood of Israel. We get the word Levitical priest. The priestly line all came from the tribe of Levi, except God redeems them from their anger and rage, and he basically takes their skills for cutting up people and makes them cut up animals. For the rest of their days and uses them in the house of worship and the sacrificial system and all the rest.

But in either case, what you see with those three children. Is when Jacob looks into the future, he sees that in the future your wickedness is going to be rebuked. That God does not cleanse, he does not, by no means does he clear the guilty. Whatever a person sows is what he's going to reap. God is not mocked. And you're thinking you're going to get away with this, and you're thinking, you know, God is just going to get over this. No, He's not, no, you won't. The wicked will be rebuked.

Every careless word you will give an account for on the day of judgment. Which I'm sure just made the room feel awesome. You know, I'm sure Judah's like, well, what's mine going to be? Because you remember Judah was not a great guy early on. He married a Canaanite woman, had two Canaanite boys who were evil in the eyes of the Lord. God killed them both, and then he accidentally slept with his daughter-in-law thinking it was a prostitute. I'm sure he's thinking, oh boy. But he turns to Judah and he says, Your brothers will praise you.

Play on his name. Judah means praise. Praise, your brothers will praise. Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies. Your father's sons will bow down to you. Judah is a young lion, the lion from the tribe of Judah. My son, you return from the kill. He crouches. He lies down like a lion or a lioness. Who dares to rouse him? The scepter, the kingly scepter, will not depart from Judah, or the staff from between his feet, until he whose right it is comes. And the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.

In other words, until the king finally comes back and establishes his rule and reign. He, this king, ties his donkey to a vine, and the colt of his donkey to a choice vine. He washes the clothes in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes. Talking about war, I think, and blood. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk. I don't know how you read that and don't see the Lord Jesus Christ. He's all over this messianic prophecy, but he's not the immediate fulfillment of this promise.

The immediate fulfillment is David. King David comes from the line of Judah. And a lot of Israel's kingly line came from the tribe of Judah. And they are anticipating the even greater king. When God establishes the covenant with David, he says, of your kingdom there will be no end. And that forever kingdom couldn't have been David because David's reign does end, but in the line of David comes the king of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, who rules and reigns forever. And so to the righteous God says, You will forever reign.

The wicked will be rebuked, the righteous will forever reign. Then he goes to the last two sons of Leah. Again, he's skipping the order now. He's grouping all of Leah's children together. Zebulun will live by the seashore and will be a harbor for ships and his territory will be next to Sidon. Issachar is a strong donkey. So one becomes extremely rich, Zebulun, because they live in an area that's right next to a trade route that if you'll throw the map up there, they this is Zebulun. They're right next to the Way of the Sea, by Galilee.

People came in. They were always trading up and in here. And so they became super strong financially speaking. And even though they were super wealthy, they were called upon to fight when God's enemies came in from the east and every time they were called upon they showed up. Same thing for Issachar, except for Issachar he was super strong. He was in a very good part of the land very prosperous, but he was so committed to the land that when invaders came in and said this is ours, they're like, well, we're not leaving, so we'll just become forced laborers.

We'd rather enjoy our fruit as a slave than we would live as free people. And so that's the prophecy for them. But in both cases they were willing to fight when the time came. This is not a super tidy way of putting it, but I would just say as a summary statement for these two boys, the last two boys of Leah, the strong will be resisted. And this is a theme that's going to get repeated over and over again because after he talks about those last two children of Leah, he goes to the two firstborn children of the maidservants, and that is Gad and Dan.

It says that Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan will be a snake by the road, a viper beside the path that bites the horse's heels, so that its rider falls backwards. And it's kind of a cryptic prophecy, but if you think about the most famous person from the tribe of Dan was a man named Samson. You guys ever heard of Samson? Big strong Samson, super long hair, he was super strong. But he also had a weakness. Delilah was Samson's

honey bunny and she tried to get him to tell her the secret of his strength and he lied to her, lied to her, lied to her, and then she's like, you always lie to me, you're never honest.

He's like, okay, it's my hair. And then she tells the other warriors about the hair and they cut the hair and so he loses his strength because of his moral and spiritual weakness. So he was a great judge, right? He was a great judge of Israel, but he was also a snake and a viper because of his moral and spiritual compromise. And that's the legacy of Dan. The legacy of Dan, the firstborn of Rachel, is that they were the first tribe to introduce idolatry to the nation of Israel. They set up an artificial priesthood that's not legit.

And that priesthood syncretized the idolatry of surrounding regions with the worship of Yahweh, and that syncretism produced unbelief and idolatry that crippled Israel and they became very, very sinful as a result. And that's why a lot of people think Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7 when the twelve tribes of Israel are mentioned. Dan is glaringly absent and is replaced by Ephraim and Manasseh, two Gentile children, which is itself kind of an interesting theological statement, but that's Dan, and that's the prophecy for Dan. Dan's other firstborn maidservant brother is Gad.

And the same thing is said of Gad. Gad will be attacked by raiders, but he will attack their heels. In other words, you're going to get opposition after opposition after opposition. One enemy was opposing them in a spiritual way, like Samson and physical. And then Gad is he's right here on the eastern edge of Israel, so Ammon, that was the invading army. They were always fighting against Gad, and Gad ended up developing these fierce, brave, valiant warriors who would always go to battle. When needed because the enemy was relentless. So the wicked get a rebuke, the righteous get a rule and reign, the enemy, the strong are resisted, and the enemy is relentless.

And then after he talks about the two firstborn children of the maidservant, he goes to the very least of the least, the secondborn children of the maidservants. They weren't true wives. You could call them concubines, but these were the two children who are the most alienated, the most ostracized, the least loved, and God gives them the greatest blessing. He says of Asher, your food will be rich, he will produce royal delicacies. Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. Later on in the Old Testament, it says that Asher is the most blessed.

Son of Jacob, even though he was the least loved and treasured at the beginning. That says something about our God, does it not? He takes the alienated and the outcast and he says, even though everybody else forgets you, I never will. You will be remembered. You will be reconciled and restored into my family. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter where you came from, it doesn't matter the damage that you may carry or the way that other people view you. If you are in my family, you are children just like every one of my children, and I will bless you beyond your imagination.

And then he turns to Joseph. Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine beside a spring. Its branches climb over the wall, the archers attacked him, they shot at him, they were hostile towards him, and yet his bow remained steady. And his strong arms were made agile by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob, by the name of the shepherd, the rock of Israel, by the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of the heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies below, and blessings of the breast and the womb.

The blessing of your father excels the blessing of my ancestors and the bounty of the ancient hills, and may that blessing rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince of his brothers. He's summarizing Joseph's life. He's saying, Joseph, even though you've been afflicted from day one, your brothers hated you. They sold you into slavery. Potiphar mistreated you. Unjust accusation. Unjust prison sentence, forgotten by your so-called friends, eventually glorified and exalted to the second in command in Egypt because God is always faithful to restore those who are under affliction.

Your life will be marked by affliction, but God will restore you. And that's exactly what happens. Joseph isn't given any land, if you notice this, but two of Joseph's children are given land, Ephraim and Manasseh. And Manasseh gets the most land next to Judah, which is not surprising. Judah was the chosen. Joseph is right next to him. And Ephraim, even though he was the firstborn, he gets less land, but he's used strategically by the Lord. Later on. The last one mentioned, I said we've got to be fast. And so at the very end.

It says, these are the twelve tribes of Israel, twelve in all, and this is what their father said to them. He blessed them, and he blessed each one with a suitable blessing. So the warrior will one day rest. The tribe of Benjamin was the tribe of the greatest warriors. This is where King Saul came from, who was head and shoulders above the rest. Benjamin is the tribe that the apostle Paul came from, who was very zealous and passionate. All the Benjamites, there's a passage that says the Benjamites were such valiant warriors.

But they also had left-handed people who could use their left hand and strike the hair of their enemy. That's how precise they were. They were like sniper mode. Amazingly gifted warriors, but this warrior tribe one day would finally rest. Now you take those seven things and again it's easy to get lost in the weeds and those seven words, those seven R's, those are not Bible words, those are just me trying to summarize the prophecy to these twelve boys. What I was so struck by as I was trying to figure out how to package this is there's this little verse right in the middle, right after the first six children, and right before the next six children.

It's Genesis chapter 49, verse 18, and the verse says I will wait for your salvation, Lord. And this word salvation is actually the Hebrew word Yeshua. It's where we get the word Jesus. It's where Jesus got his name. And of course the word Lord in capital letters is the word

Yahweh. It's the covenant name of God. And so what Jacob is doing, it's almost like a declaration of faith. He's saying, my sons, some of you are going to have it rough. Some of you are going to be attacked and resisted.

Some of you are going to be extremely blessed. But my hope is not in you or your abilities. Your faithfulness or lack thereof, I'm going to wait for the salvation of Yahweh. I'm literally going to wait for Jesus, Yahweh. And I don't think he knew he was pointing to Jesus, but if you think about what ends up happening in the Old Testament, Israel is established, all of the things I mentioned happen. They're resisted, the enemy, the land distributions, the warriors, all of it happens, and all of it paves the way for King David, who paves the way for King Jesus.

He's born into the world. And these seven things become preeminently true, not in Israel, but in Jesus. In Jesus the wicked are rebuked. In Jesus, the righteous forever reign. In Jesus, the strong are resisted. The enemy is relentless, but the outcast is remembered. The afflicted are restored. And the warrior forever rests. And in all of these things, Jesus is that warrior who forever rests when he comes in glory and establishes his kingdom. Jesus was the one who was afflicted just like Joseph. They crucified him. They beat him within an inch of his life.

But on the third day, God raised him from the dead. And when Jesus says, come you who are thirsty and weary and heavy laden, he doesn't say it to the up and comers and the big and the important. He says it to the outcasts, the tax collectors and the sinners, and he says the invitation is open to you. He was tempted in every way that we are, and yet he did so without sin. Didn't matter where the enemy came, whether it was physical or spiritual, he resisted temptation. Which is why he rebukes the wicked through his death on the cross and one day or today reigns as the righteous forever King. And what's so powerful is if you can not just look at your life from your deathbed, but begin to look from your deathbed at your life from his deathbed, you will be much more equipped to do these things that Jacob does. You'll see your past differently. You'll operate in the present differently, and you will see things in your future that you had never been able to see before. And so as we approach the Lord's table, that's what I want to encourage us to do. As we reflect on the deathbed of Jesus, we remember his body which was broken for us.

His body, the bread represents the physical suffering of Jesus, but also the spiritual suffering of living a sinless life of love and obedience and yet being resisted in every way to the point of crucifixion and death. His body was broken for us so that we wouldn't have to suffer the consequences and penalty for our sin against God. But also his blood was shed for us, and the cup represents the blood of Jesus. The blood is throughout the Old Testament a symbol of the consequences of sin. Without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sins.

And the Levite priests would shed the blood of goats and bulls and animals, but Romans 3 says it wasn't the blood of bulls and goats that take away sin. God was patient, overlooking that sin, because there was a real substitute. A sinless, spotless lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world, and Jesus is that lamb. And through his blood that was shed for us, we can drink the cup of a new covenant. A new covenant which has Jesus at the center, who is the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1, the promise to Abraham, and the promise to David, and the covenant promise to Jeremiah, a new covenant. All of those promises of God are yes and amen in the Lord Jesus Christ because from his deathbed he was willing to persevere to the end. And now God has highly exalted him above every name. And through faith in Jesus and through affection and surrendering your life to Jesus as Lord, you can live in the same exact way. So if you've never made him Lord of your life, I would encourage you as we respond to do that.

There's a connect card. You can check the box. I want to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. And put it in the offering plate as you leave today. There are other decisions that you might make and you can indicate that as well. But for now, let's together bow our heads and prepare our hearts for the Lord's table. Asking the Lord to open our eyes to see our lives the same way Jesus saw his life from the perspective of his deathbed. And that in seeing his life and death and resurrection, we would have hearts of surrender and humility and repentance, but also confidence and courage and faith.

Because our Lord is on the throne. And he's working everything together for good.