

Joseph Reminds Me of Jesus-06

by William MacDonald

The sermon explores the story of Joseph and how it points forward to Christ's return to earth, and how heaven will be a place of service, rest, reward, glory, learning, sinlessness, joy, and unhindered worship and singing.

Duration: 46:53

Scripture: Genesis 45:13, Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 60:1-3, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:6, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting God wholeheartedly and not relying on our own understanding. He highlights the need for total commitment to the Lord, citing Romans 12:1-2 as a call to present ourselves as living sacrifices and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The speaker also emphasizes the need to confess and forsake sin, as unconfessed sin hinders our ability to receive God's guidance. He uses the example of Joseph being alive and exalted to illustrate that Jesus is also alive and wants to receive us and our families. Lastly, the speaker encourages spending ample time in the Word of God, as God can speak to us through His word and guide us in specific areas of our lives.

Transcript

Chapter 45. I think you all know the story, don't you? Joseph, loved by his father, hated by his brothers, sold into slavery in Egypt, where he arose to power. But one day, for righteousness sake, he was cast into prison.

There he interpreted dreams and became known as an interpreter of dreams, eventually interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and rose to power and glory in Egypt. His brothers were forced to come down to Egypt because there was famine in the land. And they came and they met him, but they didn't know it was Joseph.

They thought Joseph was dead by this time. But Joseph knew them. And we saw how Joseph put his brothers through a time of testing and tribulation until they were acknowledged their sins and be reconciled to him.

And that leads up to this tremendous moment in chapter 45, verse 1, Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him. And he cried out, Make everyone go out from me. So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph. Does my father still live? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

And Joseph said to his brothers, Please come near to me. And they came near and he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourself because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

For these two years, the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God.

And he made me a father to Pharaoh and Lord of all his house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hasten and go up to my father and say to him, Thus says your son, Joseph, God has made me Lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not tarry.

You shall dwell in the land of Goshen. That was a section of Egypt. They would be separated really from the people of Egypt by living in the land of Goshen.

You shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds and all that you have. There I will provide for you, lest you and your household and all that you have come to poverty, for there are still five years of famine. Behold your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

So shall you tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that you have seen. You shall hasten and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brothers and wept over them.

After that, his brothers talked with him. Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brothers have come. So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, Say to your brothers, do this. Load your beasts and depart. Go to the land of Canaan.

Bring your father and your households and come to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded, do this.

Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives. Bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.

Then the sons of Israel did so, and Joseph gave them carts according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments. But to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.

He sent to his father these things, ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away, and they departed. He said to them, See that you do not become troubled along the way.

Then they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father, and they told him, saying, Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart stood still. I

think we would call that cardiac arrest.

Seriously, I think that was a form of cardiac arrest. Jacob's heart stood still because he did not believe him. When they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.

Then Israel said, It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

Joseph makes me think of Jesus. That was the subject of our little series, and here we come to the first point today where Joseph is unable to restrain himself any longer, and he reveals himself to them and invites them to draw near. He reveals himself to them.

This points forward to Christ coming back to the earth to reign over the earth, and in Revelation chapter 1 verse 7 it says, Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. But all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back one day in power and great glory.

His return will be visible all over the earth, and the nation in a special way that caused him such suffering will see him. But all the kindreds of the earth, all the nations of the earth will wail because of him. But that will be a great day for a believing Israel because he's going to invite them to draw near, even as he invites men and women to draw near to him today.

Matthew 11, 28. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

You shall find rest unto your souls. This was a wonderful moment of reconciliation, wasn't it? His brothers had treated him cruelly, and now they're perfectly reconciled, the one to another. And you know, this is what God has done for his believing people too.

Reconciled by the death of Christ. God didn't need to be reconciled, but we needed to be reconciled to him because our sins had cut us off from him. But I can never read this passage that we came to today without making the application to us as believers to what's it going to be like for us when we see the Lord Jesus.

This is the great hope of the child of God, isn't it? One day we're going to leave this scene either by death or by the rapture, and we're going to pass into the presence of the man of Calvary. We're going to see him. We're going to see the fresh wounds of Calvary in his hands, feet, and side.

And we're going to fall at his feet. The story repeats, and the lover of sinners adore. This is the hope of the child of God.

No wonder the hymn writer said, heaven for me, heaven for me. Jesus will be what makes it heaven for me. All its wonders and beauties I'm longing to see, but Jesus will be what makes it heaven for me.

Another poet wrote, not merely one glimpse, but forever. At home with him ever to be, at home in the glory celestial where glimmers the crystal sea, but there, even there in such beauty, will anything ever efface that rapturous moment of moment, my first, first look at his face. There'll be something on it.

Sinners say by his marvelous grace and ushered into his presence and see him there in all his glory. Sometimes we sing at the breaking of bread service. Oh, if this glimpse of love is so divinely sweet, what will it be, O Lord, above thy gladdening smile to me, to see thee face to face, that all thy likeness where, that all thy ways of heavenly grace through endless years declare.

What does it mean to die or to be taken home to be with the Lord? Well, it means just that, it means home. The believer is never at home in this life. This world is a wilderness wild as far as the child of God is concerned, and he's never really at home till he goes to the Father's house.

It'll mean reunion with loved ones. Some of us have loved ones who died in Christ, they've gone before. Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven? Of course.

We're not going to know less in heaven than we know down here, are we? Everyone will have his own distinct personality in heaven, and those who died in faith in Christ, when we see them, we'll know them. The relationships of life won't continue in the same way. The marriage relationship, we will know one another.

We will have fellowship with the redeemed of all the ages. Just think of that. Joseph, do you know you're going to meet Joseph? Won't it be wonderful to sit down and hear him tell the story, huh? And Jacob, and the brothers, Abraham and Isaac.

It says that, it says, many shall come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the kingdom of the Father. You know, God could have done less for us, but he won't be satisfied till he gets his redeemed people home in heaven to be with Christ and like Christ for all eternity. Heaven is going to be a place where the mysteries of life are going to be unraveled.

A lot of God's people go through horrific trials, like Joseph did. In Joseph's case, we saw how God brought all the threads together, didn't we? But it doesn't always happen in life. Some of God's people are passing through the fire today, through the flood.

They might well wonder what's it all about. It's all going to be revealed. Jesus said, what I do, you don't know now, but you will know hereafter.

A revelation of all the mysteries of life when the rights will be made wrong. Heaven's going to be a place of service. Did you know that? Some of you thought you would just sit under a palm tree and strum a banjo.

It's not heaven. Heaven is a place of service. His servants shall serve him.

That appeals to me. I like work. I like service.

I like to be busy for the Lord. We'll have that chance in eternity. And yet, at the same time, heaven's going to be a place of rest, isn't it? How do you put those together? There is such a thing as rest in serving the Lord.

Not always rest in serving the world, or even in serving a secular employer, but rest in serving him. Heaven's going to be a place of reward. It's incredible to me, you know.

God is a good bookkeeper, and God keeps accurate records, and every cup of cold water given in his name is going to be rewarded. We think some of the great things we've done are the things that'll come in for reward, but it won't be that way. Deeds of merit, as we thought them, he will show us, were but sin.

Little acts we had forgotten, he will show us. Perfection. Kept a record of it all.

I'm glad for that, because there are many dear Christians who live in obscurity and just pour out their lives in devoted service for God and for the people of God, and they never make the headlines. You never hear

about them in a public way. He knows about it.

He's going to reward it all in that coming day. Heaven's going to be a place of tremendous glory. I don't know what the most glorious situation that any of you have ever seen.

Maybe some of you think of Disneyland or something like that. It's hard to describe the glory of heaven, but you know, I believe that a lot of Christians, just before they die, have a vision of that glory. I was in Oak Park, Illinois.

There was a man, an unsaved man, lived in the next apartment, and he developed a very serious illness, and he was obviously sinking. And I had to go overseas. I had witness to him, and I had to go overseas, and when I came back, he was gone.

But his wife told me that in the hospital, the Oak Park hospital, before he died, he was lying there on the bed, and all of a sudden he said, Oh, my! And she said it was the most enthusiastic thing he had ever said in his life. What happened? I think he saw it. I think he saw the glory of heaven revealed before his eyes.

I know my own mother, when she was, before she died, she was taken one day in the hospital down to the x-ray room. It was perfectly dark, and she was left there by the attendants in the dark, and she told us that the Lord grew near, and from that moment on, the fear of death was gone. She had a personal meeting with the Lord Jesus.

She had known the Lord for many, many years, but just in that moment of darkness and blackness, he grew near to her. Heaven will be a place where we'll have a glorified body. This appeals to me.

A lot of my friends are looking forward to the day when I'll have the glorified state. What does that mean, a glorified body? It means a body that's no longer capable of sin, no longer subject to sickness, sorrow, pain, suffering, or even death itself. We don't know much about the pathology of the glorified body, but we know it's going to be like the body of the Lord Jesus in resurrection.

When the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, he had a material body. He said to Thomas, Handle me and see. You could feel it, and yet he could enter this room with all the doors and windows closed.

He could eat royal fish and honeycomb, and yet he could move about from place to place simply by thought. Glorified body. It's going to be wonderful, isn't it? To be delivered from all the infirmities of this age.

What must it mean to be delivered from that and to go in and see the King in his beauty, like Joseph's brothers went in to see their brother in his glory. Heaven's going to be a place of learning. I thought I got through school when I graduated from high school.

No. Ephesians 2, 7, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Heaven is going to be a place of perpetual unfolding of how good God has been to us.

He's sending his lovely son to die for us on the cross of Calvary. It's going to take all eternity for God to reveal it. I tell you, I look forward to that.

I really do. A place of learning. It's going to be a place of sinlessness, as we've already mentioned.

That appeals to me very, very much. And a place of joy. You know, all of our joy down.

We do have joy here as Christians, but it's all tinged with sorrow, isn't it? All tinged with sorrow. There's no such thing as a pure, unadulterated joy here. But there will be there.

And it's a place of unhindered worship and singing. I don't know about you, but you know, you come to the breaking of bread and oftentimes your mind is rattled and you go wandering in your thoughts. You know, when you should just be concentrating, it won't be like that up there.

You'll be able just to zero in on worship and it'll be absolutely pure. I love that hymn that says, If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love lift our poor heart, this weary world above. If even here the taste of heavenly springs so cheers the spirit that the pilgrims sing, what will the sunshine of his glory prove? What the unmingled fullness of his love? What hallelujahs will his presence raise? What but one loud, eternal burst of praise? It was a wonderful time when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

It'll be a wonderful time when the Lord Jesus makes himself known to his Jewish brothers. It'll be a wonderful time when we pass into his presence and see the Lamb in all his glory in Emmanuel's land. Joseph reassured them of his identity.

Undoubtedly, he had changed. Everybody changes in 25 years. And they didn't recognize him, but he recognized them and he assured them of his identity.

And that's what the Lord Jesus did in his resurrection, didn't he? This same Jesus, same one who'd been nailed to the cross of Calvary, was alive. Go tell my brethren, he said. He assured them of his identity.

He didn't hold grudges against them. And he wasn't marred by a spirit of vengeance or an urge to get even with those who had treated him so unjustly. But he showed wonderful grace to them.

What had really happened was that God had, and he told them this, God had raised him up to be their Savior. We've seen that all through the life of Joseph, that his brothers had their wickedness, but God was overruling their wickedness for his glory and for the good of his people. And God raised Joseph up to be their Savior.

He said that. He said, God sent me before you to preserve life. And you know, that's a parallel to what happened at Calvary.

Man had his wickedness. Yes, man nailed the Lord Jesus to the cross of Calvary. And God said, okay, I'll overrule your wickedness and I'll make him the Savior of the world.

That's what we read in 1 John chapter 4, verse 14. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. He says, it wasn't you who sent me here.

It was God who sent me. I tell you, it's wonderful. It's wonderful to see the experiences of life, not as man's doing, but as God's doing.

God overruling it. To see the hand of God in everything. I tell you, that gives you peace and poise in life.

Whereas if you think that man is being successful, you can get very discouraged. God made Joseph Lord of all. And God made Jesus Lord of all too.

John chapter 17, verse 2. Thou hast given him power over all places, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. God put him over all the world as the Savior of the world, that he should give eternal life to those who would come to him in simple, trusting faith. And not only that, he promised his brothers that they would be near him.

That makes us think of Jesus, doesn't it? John 14, verse 3. Verse 1, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's house are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to, here it is, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also. The grace of God is wonderful, isn't it? God could have just saved us from our sins and saved us from hell and let it go at that, couldn't he? That would have been wonderful.

But he wasn't satisfied to do that. He wanted us to be with him for all eternity. And is it so, I shall be like thy son? Is this the grace that he for me has won, Father of glory? Fought beyond all thought in glory, to his own blessed likeness brought.

John 17, in John 17, the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus, in verse 14, he prayed that they may be with him, that they might be with him where he is, that they might hold his glory. What is glory? Glory is splendor. Glory is radiance.

Glory is magnificence. That's what it is. That's the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 17, verse 24.

And he promised that he would nourish them. Did you notice that? It's just kind of blessing upon blessing poured out. Makes you think of what the Lord Jesus said, I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.

Oh boy, they certainly were having life abundantly, weren't they? Sent them back all the produce and all the food they needed. The carts were filled, bending under the weights of the food and then bring them down to Egypt to caution and to be cared for. I tell you, there never was a social security program like Joseph gave his brothers.

But that's peanuts compared to what God has done for his people. For you and for me who are saved by his grace. There's no end to the provision that he has made for us.

So shall you tell my father of all my glory in Egypt. I think the Lord, when we come together as believers to break bread, you know, on Sunday night, I think that's what God, he wants us to tell him of all the glory of the Lord Jesus. I like the breaking of bread meeting.

Do you know why? Because it's all about Jesus. Nothing about man. Not our testimonies or our experiences or anything like that.

An assembly is a group of nobodies who gather to exalt somebody. Somebody is Jesus, isn't it? That's wonderful when we can just come apart from the world, just pour our hearts and tell the father of all the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are three things here I want you to notice.

Joseph is alive. He's exalted and he wants to receive you and your family. This is a summary of what we have in this chapter.

Joseph is alive. He's exalted and he wants to receive you and your family. Dear friends, Jesus is alive.

We don't worship just a spirit floating around in the universe or a memory. We worship a living savior at God's right hand. He's exalted and he wants to receive you and your family.

I think that's good news. Acts 16 31, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house. God loves to save households.

He really does. He's been doing it. He's been doing it here in San Lorenzo Bible Chapel.

He loves to save us. Some of you are praying for unsaved loved ones. Don't give up.

Pray on. No case too hard for God. The harder they fight, the better they fall.

You have to find out, as I had to find out, that God's a better runner than I am. I was trying to run away from him, but he caught up with me. Just as Joseph's fame was heard in Pharaoh's house, so at his second coming Christ's fame will be known among the Gentiles.

I think it'd be nice to look up those verses in Isaiah. Isaiah 60 and verse 3. There are many verses in Isaiah which speak of that, which speak of the fame of the Lord Jesus and how the Gentiles would flock to the light of his coming. Verse 60, I mean, verse 1 of chapter 60.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the people, but the Lord will arise over you and his glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light and king to the brightness of your rising.

Isn't that lovely? The Gentiles shall come to your light and king to the brightness of your coming. The best of all the land of Egypt was there. Life more abundantly.

And then he sent them back with the electrifying news that he was alive. It really is a wonder that old Jacob didn't just pass out. I can understand his heart stopping.

It's a wonder he didn't die at the news. How he must have grieved all of those years over a son. What a heartache, you know, to have a son missing.

You never know whether, well, he thought he was dead because they had brought, you remember, they had brought the garment dipped in goat's blood back to the father as proof that he was dead. And now you get this wonderful news. He's not dead at all.

He's alive. That was the news at the garden that Easter morning, wasn't it? The grave was empty. Clothes were there, but he wasn't there.

He was risen from among the dead. Notice Acts chapter 2 verses 23 and 24. Peter is preaching, and this is really the substance of his preaching on that day.

Acts chapter 2, 23 and 24. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know.

Him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it. If you study the preaching in the book of Acts, you'll find that

the essence of it was the Jesus whom you crucified is alive. He's living at the right hand of God.

You better come to terms with him. That's still the message for today. Listen, Jesus on a crucifix is not a threat to anybody.

Nobody's afraid of a dead Christ, but our Christ isn't dead. He's alive. The message is repent and believe on him and know everlasting life.

When Joseph saw the carts, he believed. Well, there's something better than that. That's to believe without seeing.

When Thomas saw the wounds, he believed. He said, my Lord and my God. Jesus said, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

God wants us to believe, not because we can see, but because he says it in his word. That's what faith is. Faith is taking God at his word in the sacred scriptures.

That's what pleases God. Without faith, it's impossible to please him. Man says, show me and I'll believe.

Man comes from Missouri to show me. God says, you believe and I'll show you. By faith, we understand.

Hebrews 11, these things have I written unto you that believe that you might know. You believe first and then you'll know. You say, it's all a riddle to me.

Of course, it's a riddle to you. Put your faith in the Lord. The riddle will be solved because it's when you trust the Lord that all becomes clear.

Well, the sufferer was now crowned with glory and honor. I tell you, it's a parable of life, isn't it? Joseph had suffered greatly, but I'll tell you, those sufferings were just pinpricks compared to the glory that was revealed in him. And the Lord Jesus suffered more than any human being has ever, ever suffered.

But think of his glory today. We see Jesus, who was made for a little lower than angels, for the suffering death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, could taste death for every man. The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now.

Heaven's diadem adorns the mighty victor's brow. Praise God. Then in the next chapter, of course, chapter 46, you find Jacob going down to Egypt.

Ah, this is very wonderful. Imagine the excitement in that family as they pack up their Samson luggage and get the carts ready to go back down to Egypt. I can't imagine the emotions that surged through that father's heart that there it was.

But you know, an interesting thing happened there in chapter 46. You'd think he would have said, look, beat the donkeys and don't let them hesitate all the way down. But it doesn't happen.

It says Israel took his journey, chapter 46, verse 1, with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Jacob's life is an interesting life. Jacob and Israel are the same person here.

He got better as he got older and he died in a blaze of glory. I think that's good. He got better as he got older.

He was growing. You say, what's happening here, MacDonald? Well, tell you what's happening. Instead of just rushing down to Egypt, he stops for confirmation of the will of God.

He wants guidance from God. Why? Because his fathers had been told, don't go down to Egypt, weren't they? Abraham, Isaac. They were not to go to Egypt.

Egypt was a picture of the world and they were not to go to Egypt. And now Jacob finds himself going down to Egypt. Ah, better stop.

Offer sacrifices to the Lord. Get a confirmation of the will of God. The importance of guidance in the Christian life.

If Jacob had gone simply by natural affection, he would have gone down there in a hurry. He wouldn't have stopped at Beersheba, I'll tell you that. Nothing could have kept him back, but he wanted to know God's will.

Show spiritual growth in the man. Do we make every decision in life a matter of prayer? It's a good thing to do, isn't it? I'd like to share with you in these closing moments some little things on guidance that have been a help to me in the Christian life and maybe they'll be a help to you. Because we all have, all of us who are believers at least, have to go through this to know the will of God in our lives.

First of all, I'd say to you this. If you want to know God's will, you have to desire it intensely, not just be curious. If you want to know God's will, you've got to desire it absolutely intensely.

God doesn't play games, you see. And secondly, you've got to trust Him fully rather than your own judgment. Proverbs 3, 5 and 6, trust in the Lord with all thy heart, lean not to your own understanding and all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall what? Erect your pot.

That's right. Trust Him with all your heart, lean not to your own understanding. Then three, I have to be totally committed to the Lord.

It says that in Romans 12, verses 1 and 2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present yourself to God a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Why? So that you can know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Four, confess and forsake sin as soon as you're conscious that it has come into your life. I can't expect to know God's guidance if I'm living in sin, if there's unconfessed sin in my life. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me and I can't say that I blame Him.

But if I confess and forsake sin as I'm aware of it in my life, then I'm clean before the Lord and He can use a clean vessel and He can guide a clean vessel too. If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then five, pray without ceasing.

Pray without ceasing. I don't think God will show me His will unless I signify my earnestness by fervent prayer in the matter and not just once. Then spend much time in the Word of God.

That's number six, spend much time in the Word of God because in a marvelous way God speaks through His Word. God can take a verse completely out of context and bring it home to my mind today and it'll tell me exactly what He wants me to do and yet if I told you it wouldn't say a thing to you. Because you're not

looking for God's guidance in that same area.

A lot of people have gone to the mission field on the basis, among other things, of a verse of Scripture that God brought home powerfully. I read in Echoes of Service recently where a couple were waiting upon the Lord for guidance for the mission field and they were reading in their daily reading and it said, this is not your rest, arise and go in. Now, if I read that this morning it wouldn't say too much to me but it said it to them.

It was part of their guidance for the Lord. So, if I'm going to know God's guidance in my life I've got to spend time in the Word of God. Then seven, get as much information as you can.

I find that the more information I get the easier it is for God to guide me. For instance, if I were exercised about serving the Lord in Zaire, I would try to learn everything I could about Zaire or Albania. I might find out as I studied about Albania that it's practically impossible to go there as a missionary, humanly speaking.

Of course, God could open that door. India, difficult. I should know the facts.

And then I find it very helpful to list the pros and cons. Maybe I think God is guiding me in a certain direction. I put a big T on a page and I list the pros and I list the cons and see which way they go.

Nine, don't manufacture your own guidance. A lot of people trust their own wisdom rather than God. The best attitude is I'd rather walk in the dark with God than walk alone in the light.

Don't trust your own wisdom, trust God's wisdom. And here's a hard one, number 10, be willing to wait. God doesn't always show you right away.

I tell you, Joseph had to learn something about waiting, didn't he? And even dear Jacob going down to Egypt had to stop there at Beersheba. Boy, I tell you, that was really something when he was so anxious to see his son again. But he did it.

If you're praying for guidance and no guidance comes, God's guidance is to stay where you are. Maybe you're praying about guidance to go somewhere, do something, and no guidance comes. Well, that's your answer.

God's guidance is to stay where you are. Darkness about going is light about staying. And then keep busy while you're waiting for guidance.

God doesn't guide people who are laid back in a lazy boy sipping diet Cokes. There's no kind of people he guides. You can't steer a bicycle when it's standing.

You have to be moving the bicycle to steer it. That's the way God is. God guides people who are moving.

Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might. When I'm seeking the guidance of God, I ask him to confirm the guidance in the mouths of two or three witnesses. I don't go just by one thing, like one verse of Scripture.

I want him to give me two or three. And if he does that, then I can be sure. Why? Isn't one word enough? The Scripture says in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall everything be established, doesn't it? And we're entitled to wait for two or three witnesses.

You might be in a meeting and somebody might say something publicly. They don't even know what you're going through. And yet what they say publicly is use of God.

I've had that happen. The man that was preaching doesn't even know to this day that he said something that was the guidance of God in my life. But I didn't go by that alone.

Look for the guidance of two or three witnesses. Be careful when you put out the fleece, you know. People say, well, if such and such happens, then I'll know if God wants me.

Be careful when you put out the fleece. It makes me think of the man who loved coffee cake. And every day he went to the office, he brought a coffee cake.

When they had their coffee clashes, they always had coffee cake. And of course he was putting on the weight. And so he decided that he would quit the coffee cake.

And it was very dreary for the next few weeks there at the office because there was no coffee cake. And one day he showed up with a coffee cake. They said to him, hey, we thought you had quit coffee cake, you know.

Although they were glad he had bought it. And he said, well, I'll tell you how it happened. He said, I went by the bakery and I smelt the baking.

And he said, I put out the fleece. And I said, if there was a parking space, I would go in and get the coffee cake. He said, the fourth time around the block there was a parking space.

Be careful when you put out the fleeces. You can always put out a fleece that'll work, but don't do it. Let me say this.

Sometimes guidance in life is very, very clear. Sometimes it's not so clear. Sometimes you just have to let the peace of Christ umpire in your heart.

And remember this, God usually leads one step at a time. Doesn't show you the whole blueprint. Doesn't show you the whole pathway ahead.

Usually leads one step at a time. But I want to assure you today, nobody who sincerely wants the will of God will ever miss the way. Might surprise you.

Nobody who sincerely wants the will of God will ever miss the way. And his will is good and acceptable and perfect. A lot of people think the Lord's will is all he wants for you is what's really undesirable, what you don't like, what goes against your That isn't the way it is.

When you're in the will of God, God controls your intellect and your emotions and your will so that when you're really doing his will, you're doing the thing you really love to do. It's true. Absolutely true.

You think, oh, I'm afraid. I'm afraid of being called to missions. I'm afraid of tarantulas.

I'm afraid of spiders and serpents. And you can think of all those things. That isn't the way it is at all.

God leads you. You're in his will. You're doing the thing that you love to do.

He changes you so that you do love to do it. We'll finish the story of Joseph next week, Lord willing, and try to draw the threads together and summarize some of the great lessons that we get from the life of this dear man of God. Shall we pray? And then John's going to lead us in closing hymns.

Father, we thank you for all the spiritual food we find in the pages of sacred scripture. We thank you that every word of God is pure. And we can truly say I adore the infinity of scripture.

But most of all, we adore the Savior when we think of what he's done for us. How he came and suffered blood and died for us on the cross of Calvary. Oh, Father, we thank you for the prospect, those of us who are saved, of being with him and like him for all eternity.

And for those who are outside of Christ today, how we long to see them coming to the Savior, repenting of their sins, and hearing his word, your sins are forgiven you. Go in peace. We pray for your blessing upon your word.

Honor your word and honor your son in his worthy name. Amen.

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