

# Joseph Reminds Me of Jesus-07

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald draws parallels between the life of Joseph and the character of Jesus, emphasizing themes of grace, mentorship, and God's sovereignty in adversity.*

**Duration:** 47:04

**Scripture:** Genesis 47:25, Genesis 49:21, Isaiah 4:2, Hebrews 2:11

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of honoring God in all aspects of life. He uses the example of Joseph from the Bible, who went through many trials but was ultimately exalted because he honored God. The speaker also mentions the story of Eric Liddell, an Olympic athlete who honored God and became well-known as a result. The main message is that God honors those who honor Him, whether it be in school, at home, in the community, or at work. The speaker encourages the audience to give their lives to God in service and to present themselves as living sacrifices, which is described as the most sensible and reasonable thing to do.

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## Transcript

They've given us elders in the local assembly. If you go to a person who is not really deep spiritually, that might give you completely wrong advice. But if you go to a person whose roots are deep in God and who knows the Word of God, it's a different story.

Avoid going to someone who tell you what you want them to tell you. We do that sometimes, don't we? You know, our hearts are set upon a certain pathway and we say, well, if I go to the elders, they might not say that, you know. So I think I'll go to Brother Joe or Sister Anna, something like that.

Avoid doing that because you're really only asking for trouble. What you want is to hear the Lord speaking to you through man of God in a situation like this. And incidentally, while I'm on that subject, I think it's very good for all young believers to seek out some mentor.

That's the best word I can use. All growing up as a younger man, I always had an older man that I went to to share my problems and to ask his advice, especially problems with regard to the Word of God. You know, I'd come to a person, what does that mean? And I would take out my little card and I'd write it down and every once in a while I'd get together with some brother and we'd go over these things.

Because he loved it too. He loved to talk about the Word of God and he loved to encourage in the Word of God. So I would encourage that for every young brother or sister saved by the grace of God, get some mentor that you can go to with problems, difficulties about the scripture and get help as well as guidance in the Christian life.

OK, now we're going to go on with our little outline. And we got down to this point we saw last week where David sent his brothers away with the electrifying news that he was alive to go back to the Father. And we see now that the one who had suffered so greatly was crowned with glory and honor.

How this speaks to us about the Lord Jesus, doesn't it? The pathway for him was from the glory down, down, down, became a servant of men and suffered even the death of the cross. And God has now highly exalted him and given him a name, the name that's above every name. Now, coming to chapter 47, it's interesting in the verses that I read to you this morning, how Joseph, he was kind of a big wheel down there in Egypt, if you don't mind my saying so.

And here his bedraggled brothers come down in a time of famine from Canaan to Egypt. And you might think, I'll just veil them from Pharaoh. No, he didn't.

Took them in, introduced them to Pharaoh. He was not ashamed of his brothers. Don't ever be ashamed of your fellow Christians.

The Lord Jesus is not ashamed of us. And he has plenty of reason to be, too, doesn't he? The Lord Jesus has plenty of reason to be ashamed. He's not.

Look at that verse in Hebrews chapter 2, verse 11. I just want to go slowly over this, although my tendency is to hurry. I think this is beautiful.

It says, for both he who sanctifies, and sanctifies there means set apart, the Lord Jesus who sets us apart, and those who are being sanctified, that's us, those of us who are believers who are being sanctified, are all of one, for which reason he is not ashamed to call them brethren. I think that's beautiful. The Lord Jesus, he looked down upon us, and all our weakness and infirmity, yet saved, redeemed by his precious blood, and he's not ashamed to say those are my brethren.

I don't think that means that we should call him brother, either. You know, we don't have any scriptural support for some of the hymns, you know, say my elder brother, speaking of Jesus. I don't think there's a scriptural justification for that, but he's not ashamed to call us brethren, brothers.

It's quite a scene, isn't it? Joseph with his brothers there before Egypt. Try to picture it in your mind. Not ashamed.

Jesus isn't ashamed. Somebody said, God has a last name. He's not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

That's remarkable, isn't it? Or you could put your name, if you're saved by the grace of God, put your name in there. That's it. Not ashamed to be called your God.

And that really is marvelous, because it says he's a God of grace, isn't he? Jacob, he was a cheat. He was a supplanter before he was saved. And yet God is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

I think that's lovely. No wonder we're worshipers of the Lord. Now, here's another lovely thing in our story.

The father blessed Pharaoh. Genesis 47, 7. I read that to you, didn't I? And I kind of paused over the words when I read it. Genesis 47, 7. Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Why are you making a big deal about that? Well, it's very, very important. It's very, very significant. Because you know what the scripture says? It says the lesser is blessed by the greater.

You know, if I painted that picture before you, here's Pharaoh and all his splendor there on the throne in Egypt. And here's this gnarled, wrinkled, old little Jew coming into his presence. And I say to you, which is the greater? Well, you'd be tempted to say, Pharaoh is the greater, of course.

The Bible says he isn't. The Bible says Jacob is the greater because the less is blessed by the greater. Tremendous, isn't it? See, God sees things in a different way than we see them, doesn't he? God doesn't reckon greatness the way we reckon it.

This came home to me this last week. I had the funeral of a 99-year-old lady out at Bethesda. She had been living at Bethesda.

She would have been 100 in December. She went home to be with the Lord. That dear soul was stone deaf.

I mean, for I don't know how long now. She's been very hard to have communication with those about her. Stone deaf.

She was deaf physically, but she wasn't deaf spiritually. And I'll tell you, that's what's important. As a young girl, she had heard the voice of Jesus say, come home to me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast. She came to Jesus as she was, weary and worn and sad. She found in him a resting place and he made her glad.

She wasn't deaf to Christ's call to discipleship. She really lived the life of a disciple. She didn't have much of this world's goods.

But what she had, she administered faithfully to the Lord. But last week, she heard the voice, although she was deaf, she heard the voice of the Lord Jesus say, arise, my loved one, and come away. She did.

And as soon as she heard it, she went. And she heard the Savior say, welcome home, Tina. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And I thought of the irony of the situation. We're there for the memorial service of somebody.

She never made the headlines. She was obscure as far as this was. You never even heard about her, most of you.

Obscure as far as the world was concerned. But she had the wisdom of God. I thought the world with all its arrogance and with all its pride, the unsaved world, they think that the world is their oyster.

And they think that they have good hearing, you know, and good wisdom and all the rest. And she had it that they don't. It came home to me in part.

I think of that with regard to Jacob going before Pharaoh. Everybody thinks, well, Pharaoh's a great one. No, he's not a great one in God's reckoning.

Jacob was a great one. Why? Because Jacob had faith in the Lord. That's why.

Not because he was a greater person personally. He had a lot of warts and wrinkles as far as his character was concerned. He had faith in the Lord.

He was wise enough to do that. And, you know, that is a preview of the time when reconciled Israel will be a channel of blessing to the Gentiles. All of this, you know, has a prophetic aspect to it.

And when the Lord Jesus comes back to set up his reign upon the earth, Israel is going to be the head of the nations and not the feet. And blessing is going to go out through Israel to the Gentile nations. It isn't exactly that way in the Middle East today, is it? That's not the way it is as you read your newspaper.

That's the way it's going to be. And fruit from Israel is going to cover the earth. Here you have the despised little Jew, Jacob, blessing the Gentile pharaoh.

It's a preview of what's going to happen in a coming day. Now, moving over into your Bible to chapter 49, you have a very interesting picture there of Jacob calling his sons and blessing them. This was very common in those days where one of the patriarchs, a man of God, feeling that the end was near, he would call in his children and he would pronounce a blessing upon each one of them.

And the interesting thing is those blessings were prophetic. Those men were speaking by inspiration. And what they said concerning their son actually came to pass.

I sometimes wonder if we do that enough. We say to our boys and girls, now eat your Cheerios and someday you may be president of the United States. You know, kind of shallow, isn't it? But, you know, I wonder if we held before them the goals that Scripture holds before them.

We might not see more. A virgin said to his son, my son of God should call you to his service. I should not like to see you dribble down into a king.

That's the way I think we should talk to our children. Say to our son, eat your Cheerios and someday you may be an elder in a local assembly. That's the way God sees it.

To him, that's what's important. Trouble is, a lot of Christian parents would be embarrassed to death to think of their children out on the streets of Calcutta preaching the gospel. Many Christian parents today are raising their children for the world and for hell.

And very few children of wealthy Christians are going on for the Lord today. Very few. But here you find old Jacob and he calls his sons in before him and he pronounces a blessing.

And I wish we had time to go over all of the blessings. So they're beautiful. But if you'll notice in verse 21 of chapter 49, he says, Joseph is a fruitful bough.

I love it. A fruitful bough by a well. Well, that's nice, isn't it? Any tree or bush or plant that's planted by a well.

What does that mean? Well, it means it's got a plentiful supply of moisture and nourishment from the well. Of course, that was true of Joseph, wasn't it? Joseph was a lovely character. And you think of the fruit that he bore for God.

And interestingly enough, fruit in the Bible generally speaks of Christian character. It generally does. When we think of fruit, we think of souls one to Jesus.

And I have no objection to that at all. No objection to it at all. But that's not exactly what the scripture envisages.

It envisages Christian character. The fruit of the spirit is not souls one for Christ. Exactly.

Love, joy, peace. All the things that Paul mentions in Galatians chapter 5. But you know, there was never any person more fruitful for God than the Lord Jesus. And there was never any tree that brought so much fruit for God as the cross of Calvary.

I turn to Isaiah chapter 4 and just see how the scripture comments on this. Isaiah chapter 4 and verse 27, uh, 4-2. Isaiah 4-2 says, In that day, the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped.

The branch of the Lord is one of the Old Testament names of the Lord Jesus Christ. That day, the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing. In Genesis, I mean, Isaiah chapter 27 and verse 6. Those who come, he shall cause to take root in Jacob.

Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit. Years ago, when I first went to Israel, I remember that they had gone into a country that had been desolate for many years. And they started to cultivate it and they started to irrigate it.

And it was amazing the way that you found groves of orange trees and lemon trees and grapefruit all over Israel, you know. And they thought that they had brought in the millennium. They thought they had made the desert to rejoice and blossom like the rose.

That wasn't the fulfillment of these verses of scripture. These verses of scripture look forth to the time when the Lord Jesus will come back again and set up his kingdom upon the earth. But if you'll continue there in Genesis chapter 49, it not only says that Joseph was a fruitful vow, but it says that his branches ran over the wall.

And we saw that, didn't we? He was not only a blessing to his own brothers, but he was a blessing to the Gentiles as well. It seems wherever Joseph was given his right place, there was blessing. That's true.

Wherever the Lord Jesus is given his right place, there's blessing. Whether in the individual life, the local church, or in a country for that matter. So we read here, his branches ran over the wall.

And so the blessing of Christ overflowed to the Samaritans and to the Gentiles. You see, when the Lord Jesus came to earth 2000 years ago, he came primarily to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but not exclusively. And so when you come to John chapter 3, for instance, you find the Lord Jesus ministering to a Jew whose name was Nicodemus.

You come to the very next chapter and you find a blessing flowing over the wall. The wall there is what constituted Israel as a nation. And here the blessing is flowing over the wall to a Samaritan.

The Samaritans were despised by the Jews, weren't they? But the confines of the law that kept Israel a separate nation were not great enough to contain the blessings of Christ. And so they overflowed to the Samaritans, John chapter 4, and then to the Gentiles as well in John chapter 10. It says in Genesis 49, 23, the archers sorely grieved him and shot at him.

This is some of the sufferings that Joseph went through at the hands of his brethren. And of course, we find this happening to the Lord Jesus, too. In his trial and death at Calvary, the archers sorely grieved him and shot at him.

We see him lifted up there on the cross of shame, dying for our sins. But in spite of that, it says, Jacob says his bow remained in strength. It was not defeated.

Calvary was the victory for the Lord Jesus and for us as well. And we want to read those two verses, Hebrews chapter 12, verse 2. They're very familiar to us. Speaking about the Lord Jesus, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and it sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And also, first Peter chapter 2, verse 23, and it says there who, when he was reviled, did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously. Blessed Lord Jesus.

And then there's just one final point here. Just as Joseph showed no revenge or no retaliation, Genesis chapter 50, verse 19. The brothers were afraid.

They were afraid that when the old man died, Jacob, when their father died, that Joseph would change his tomb and take it out on them. That had been known to happen in the Old Testament history. Genesis 50, verse 19.

Joseph said to them, do not be afraid for I am in the place of God. Now, don't misunderstand that. That didn't mean he was God.

He wasn't claiming deity for himself, but he was saying, look, I'm standing here as God's representative on your behalf. That's what he was saying. Of course, that's what the Lord Jesus.

For it is the grace of God is wonderful that he would send his lovely son down to this earth to suffer, bleed, and die for a race of rebels, that man would nail his creator to a cross of wood. And God could have just done like that and wiped humanity off the face of the earth. He could have.

He didn't. He didn't show revenge. And I think it's, and I've mentioned this before, I think it's a marvelous illustration of the grace of God that although the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem, when God sent his Holy Spirit, he sent him to Jerusalem.

That's not revenge, that's grace. Told the disciples to tarry there in Jerusalem until they were endued with strength from on high. Excuse me.

Now, in the closing moments, I want to go over some of the lessons from the life of Joseph. Some of the lessons we've learned from the life of Joseph, I think it'll just be profitable for us to remind ourselves of

them today. First lesson is this, sometimes the best people in life are least appreciated.

The Lord taught his disciples that, and the Word of God teaches us that. We shouldn't be surprised if we're not recognized by the world. Actually, we don't want the world's recognition.

It says, therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not. And there's a very real sense in which Christians are traveling incognito through the world. That's good, that's good.

Don't seek a place for yourself in the world. If you're a child of God, seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. I would recommend a little prayer to you that I prayed all my Christian life.

I didn't make up this little ditty, but I adopted it. It says, keep me little and unknown, loved and prized by Christ alone. If you want to make yourself a real target for the devil, try to get a place of publicity and recognition.

He'll shoot you down in no time. It's been happening in the evangelical world in the last year or two. Men who tried to build up a big popular following in the world, God will not share his glory with another.

So, don't feel too badly if you go through the world incognito. Try to do that, pleasing the heart of Christ and not trying to be known in the world. Sometimes the best people in life are least appreciated.

Sometimes bad things do happen to good people. You think of all that Joseph went through. Wow.

And he never became bitter, cold, or cynical in spite of anything that happened to him in his life. I think that's lovely, don't you? Wow. I've known people and something happened to them in life and they went through the rest of their life just as cranks.

It's a terrible thing, isn't it? You could hardly get a positive note out of them when they sang their life's ditty. Actually, everybody has adverse things happening to them in life. Try to see God's hand in it.

That's what Joseph did. Joseph knew that there was a love superintending his life. He was willing to wait till the last chapter was written.

I see very strongly in the story of Joseph that man has his wickedness, but God has his way. There are times when if we had stopped our study of Joseph, or we had put a period there, it's like, wow, man has his wickedness. Man has a ruling hand in life.

He's the one who dictates what's going to happen. If I tell you it comes to end, you have to add those words, God has his way. And God does allow sin to work itself out to a certain extent in life.

You want to live a life of sin? You? You want to live a life of immorality, do you? God allows it. God's not going to strike you dead. He allows it, but he's going to have his way.

It's all that. God is sovereign, plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm. I see in the book of, in the story of Joseph, nothing happens in life by chance.

And I think that's so good for us to remember that. The world, the vocabulary of the world constantly has this word luck in it. And luck, there is no luck for the child of God.

God is moving all things according to his own purposes. And absolutely nothing happens to us by chance. We use the word accident sometimes, you know, out in the freeway have an accident.

Yeah, but it wasn't an accident. The God who loves us and cares for us and he's with us there just as much as at any other time in our life. Another lesson which the scripture teaches us and which we know is all too true, and that is this, the way of the transgressor is hard.

I mean, for a while, those brothers who had treated Joseph so cruelly, so cruelly, for a while, they just thought that they were the kingpins, you know, to do what they jolly well pleased to do and get away with it. Tell you, before they got through, they shed many a tear, didn't they? They caught up with them, the way of the transgressor is hard. And I want to tell you this morning, God has built certain basic principles into the universe and you can't defy them.

One of them is the way of the transgressor. I heard of a man who said, I don't know much about the Bible, but I know this, the way of the transgressor is hard. And he knew it from personal experience.

Experience is a hard taskmaster, but fools will learn in no other way. You don't have to learn that way. You can go to the Word of God, you can find out God's program in the Word of God, and you can obey it and have a good life.

You really can. If you don't want it that way, go and learn it by experience. Experience is a hard taskmaster, but fools will learn in no other way.

And closely associated with that, be sure your sin will find you out. People think about the perfect crime. There is no perfect crime.

You say, well, I know somebody who did so-and-so and so-and-so and he never got caught. Yeah, the last chapter hasn't been written. What about the life to come? Be sure your sin will find you out.

Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. And nobody gets away with it, except when I come to the Lord and confess my sin, when I repent of my sin and receive the Lord Jesus as my Savior, the past is blotted out.

That's not just good news. That's the best news, the best news that ever fell in my ears. That the past of my life could just be erased, made clean through the blood of Christ, when I come as a guilty, lost sinner and receive him by an act of faith.

Or when I, as a Christian, sin and come before him and confess my sin. What a wonderful thing to know. He forgives my sin.

He cleanses me from all unrighteousness. There's nothing in the world as good as that. And closely associated with those two, last two I mentioned, we reap what we sow.

We reap what we sow. And this works in a good way, too. He that sows to the flesh reaps accordingly.

He sows to the spirit, reaps life after life. There are people, do you know, there are people in life who live for the body. What do they reap? Well, a skeleton and a bowl of dust.

The body is too small a geographical, isn't it? It's not worth it. The body is too small a geographical service to just give your life to it. He that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap destruction.

He that sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. It's wonderful. Even if our bodies die, we go into the grave, we have what really matters.

And incidentally, every person should provide himself with some honorable work to do while his body's lying in the grave. Do you ever think of that? Everybody should provide himself with and herself with some honorable work to do while his body's lying in the grave. How can I do that? There's a lot of ways you can do it.

By investing in the cause of God, you can do it, can't you? By leading souls to Christ, you can do it. Spiritual grandchildren and great-grandchildren see it growing in that way. Then eight, and this is so clear.

If there's anything clear in the life of Josephus, it's God honors those who honor him. He does. Sometimes it takes a while.

Joseph had to really go through the mill before he was exalted, but it came just the same. Some of you have seen that picture, the chariots of fire. The story of how Eric Little won the Olympics in 1924 in a certain race.

He honored God in a marvelous way. And it was just a few years ago that his name became a household word in the United States. That President Reagan spoke about the film.

And if that film had one message more than anything else, it says, God honors those who honor him. It's true no matter where you are. Whether you're at school, in the home, in the community, at work, you honor the Lord.

I want to tell you, you might get the curled lip. You might get the sneer. You might get a mild form of persecution.

Your blood won't flow. It's okay. Don't worry.

You honor God. I promise you, God will honor you. Then we see in the life of Joseph that we're all tempted.

But the sin is not in being tempted, but in yielding to the temptation. Everybody's tempted. Not of God.

We're tempted. We're tempted from within, and we're tempted from without. And there's no sin in being tempted.

Joseph was tempted, but he didn't yield to the temptation. As we said, he lost his coat but gained a crown. And closely connected with that, we don't have to sin.

Christian could never say, I have to sin. You should never say that. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that we will have the power not to sin.

We sin when we want to sin. When we don't call on the name of the Lord. We see in the life of Joseph that God is pleased when we suffer for doing good.

Not when we suffer for our own sins and failures and mistakes. It's great glory to God if I live a life of righteousness and suffer for it. But not if I suffer for doing foolish things.

There's no glory for God in that at all. Joseph suffered for righteousness' sake. God was greatly glorified that nobody ever suffered for righteousness' sake like the Lord Jesus himself.

Here's an important lesson I think we get from the life of Joseph. We shouldn't wait for circumstances to change. We should glorify God in the circumstances.

You know, Joseph was there in prison, and he said, well, I'll just sit this one out. And when I got out of prison, I'm going to serve the Lord. You know, is that what he did? No, he didn't.

He was busy for God in prison. He was interpreting the dreams of his fellow prisoners and all the rest. Finally, he's called forth to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh.

And that led him right to the top. There is a natural temptation when things are going bad in life, as we think. Say, man, I'll just wait till conditions are more favorable.

And then I'll give God the best of my life. No, no, don't do that. Glorify God wherever you are in life, whatever is going on in your life.

And he will see you through. We see in the life of Joseph that when God seems to be doing nothing, you can be sure that he's quietly working out his purposes and keeping his promises. Sometimes that's one of the mysteries of life, isn't it? The silence of God.

Why doesn't God do something? Know this, that when he seems to be doing nothing, if you're a child of God, if you're saved by his grace, when he seems to be doing nothing, he's quietly working out his purposes. God's wheels, the wheels of his chariot are moving. And he's keeping his promises.

He is. And he comes to the end of the life of Joseph. Exactly what happens.

And every Christian, when he comes to the end of his life, will be able to look back and say, my Jesus has done all things well. I can do that. I can say that today.

And I'm not at the end of life quite yet. I can say, my Jesus has done all things well. I wouldn't want it any other way than the way he's planned it for me.

I'm not pleased with all my own doings, but I'm pleased with everything the Lord has ever done in my life. I'm fulfilled in him and I found satisfaction in him. I could stand here and say he satisfies the longing heart.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. That's true. Scripture says it.

We see it in the life of Joseph. And his brothers eventually come and they fall down and they bow before him. Here's another lesson we learned from the life of Joseph.

We should not be weary in well-doing. We will reap. We don't faint.

Paul teaches that to us in Galatians, doesn't he? Don't be weary in well-doing. I've been plotting on such a weary road, you know. I am weary, oh so weary of traveling here below.

Well, don't be weary. Just press on and the time of reaping is coming. You don't always reap the harvest that you never do the day you sow the seed.

A man goes forth and he spreads the seed on the field. But he didn't expect to reap it the next day. No, that isn't the way the law of harvest works.

And it isn't the way in the spiritual realm either. When we have been wronged, when somebody does something to wrong us, we should immediately forgive in our hearts. When the person confesses and repents, we should forgive verbally.

You don't forgive verbally until the person repents, confesses his sin. But in our hearts, we should do it right away. And we should forgive indefinitely when a person repents, right? Indefinitely.

That's so hard. Peter said, how many times, Lord? Seven? Jesus said, I didn't say seven, but until seventy times seven. That means indefinitely.

That's kind of hard, Lord. He says, yeah, that's the way I've done it with you. And if I've forgiven you millions, you should be willing to forgive a few cents.

Isn't that it? That's what the Lord is saying to us. We learn in the life of Joseph, certainly by type, in that day, there was only one way of salvation. There was famine over the world, and there was only one way to get relief from the famine, and that was to go to Joseph.

Dear friends, there's only one way of salvation today. And his name is Jesus. Not Islam, not Buddhism, not Confucianism, not Protestantism or Catholicism, but Christ.

He's the way of salvation. Not in a church, not in a law, not in any set of precepts, but in a person, a living person at God's right hand. Listen, let me tell you this.

Only a living person can save you. And the Lord Jesus is God's way of salvation. I mentioned before today, whenever Joseph was given his proper place, there was blessing.

Listen, when you give Jesus his proper place in your life, there'll be blessing too. Absolutely. Never failed.

Every knee was required to bow to Joseph. What is the lesson? Bow the knee to Jesus now. Don't wait till you have to do it.

It'll be too late then. Bow in willing submission and say with Thomas, my Lord and my God, this is what's really important. Think of how Joseph showed grace to his brothers and invited them to draw near.

If you're here today and you're not a decided Christian, that's what God is doing with you. The Lord Jesus says, come unto me, all you that labor in a heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Invite you to draw near to him.

It was a point that I didn't bring out here that I should have in my haste this morning. It's in Genesis 47. And I should have mentioned it where the brothers said, let me see if I can just find that verse 25.

The brothers said, so they said, you have saved our lives. Let us find favor in the sight of our Lord, in my Lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And what's the lesson there? Gratitude for salvation should lead to total consecration of life, right? Gratitude.

They said, look, you've saved us. We're willing to be your servants. He said, well, that's quite sensible.

Of course, very logical. Listen, that's the way it should be with us. The Lord Jesus didn't save us so that we would live our petty lives the way that we want to live them.

You know, a lot of people want to come for Christ, for salvation, but they have no thought of turning their lives over to him for service. They want to live their lives the way they want to live them. Foolish, absolutely ridiculous.

Listen, thou hast bled and died for me. Henceforth, I will live for thee. O Christ, thy bleeding hands and feet, thy sacrifice for me.

Each wound, each tear demands my life, a sacrifice for thee. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

If you really have an appreciation of what the Lord Jesus did for you, it's only one sensible thing, is to give your life to him for service. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto him, which is what? Your reasonable service. Most sensible, sane, rational, reasonable thing a person can do.

I'm afraid of what he might ask me to do. Well, then don't give it to him. You can't trust him for that.

But all he wants is the best for you, and all you are is afraid of a blessing. The secret of Joseph's life was that the Lord was with him. We came to that over and over again.

The Lord was with Joseph, with him in prison, with him everywhere he went. There's no substitute for this. The Lord was with him.

We can have the Lord with us, too, in a very special way every day of our lives, by turning our lives over to him. And then I see, too, here, a final thought as our time is gone. Lifetime is training time for reigning time.

That was true in Joseph's case, wasn't it? All of those things he went through, and God was just preparing him for the throne. That's all. And that's what God is doing with his people today.

Lifetime is training time for reigning time. If we suffer with him, we'll reign with him, it says. I remember, I wish I had saved this clipping, but years ago, when Queen Elizabeth was going to cross the Atlantic, come to visit the United States, there was an article in a paper, a magazine, that told how the attendants on the plane were trained.

You wouldn't believe it. Those people had to go through. How to behave in the presence of the Queen, how to serve the Queen, and all of this.

It was tremendous. That's what we're going through now. We're being trained right now for that day when the church will be taken home as the body and bride of Christ, to be with him for all eternity.

It's kind of important to know how to behave in his presence. That accounts for all the suffering, too. Some of you have been going through suffering.

Is it all needless? No, it's not needless. It's part of the training process. Part of the training process.

So that wonderful day when we will be revealed as sons of God and be with him and like him forever. We're going to look to God in prayer, and then John has a closing hymn for us. Father, we just thank you for your precious word this morning.

And we think of the invitation still going out to those who have never responded to the Savior. We think of how blessings are being held back. And if they would only come, the blessings, you would open the windows of heaven and they just flow out like a mighty Niagara.

They do pray that by the Spirit of God, men and women will be convicted of their sinful loss, helpless, hopeless, doomed state and come to Jesus and say, Christ for me. And those of us who are saved, Lord, how sensible it is to just give you all that we have and are. We hear you saying every time in the breaking of bread, this is my body given for you.

And we know the only practical response is to say, Lord Jesus, this is my body given for you. Bless your word to our hearts today. We pray in the Savior's worthy and precious name.

Amen.

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