

Introduction

1. Christians seem to come in two flavors:
 - a. Behind door number 1 are those you meet and you have no idea they're a Christian until or unless they tell you
 - b. Behind door number 2 are those you meet who don't have to say anything; you just begin to realize there's something about them and you know it must be Christ
2. Every believer should really be like door number 2, demonstrating our faith in God and His promises by the things that we do and say; we really shouldn't have to make an announcement before people know that we are Christians
3. Joseph was that way—at nearly every turn, Joseph demonstrated his faith in God and His promises no matter what came his way
4. As we come to the last chapter in Genesis, we learn of both Jacob's and Joseph's deaths and once again we see Joseph demonstrate his faith in God and His promises in three additional ways:
 - a. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by burying Jacob in the land of Canaan
 - b. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by recognizing God's sovereignty
 - c. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by reminding his brothers of those promises

A. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by burying Jacob in the land of Canaan (50:1-14)

1. After Jacob's death, Joseph had him embalmed and all Egypt mourned for him (READ 50:1-3):
 - a. Embalming in Egypt was something typically done only for royalty and it was normally done by priests and for religious reasons (to preserve the physical body because they believed the spirit still needed a place to reside in the afterlife)
 - b. It's unlikely Joseph would have embalmed Jacob's body for this reason, but rather for a more practical reason: preserving the body until he could bury Jacob in Canaan:
 - 1) Our first clue is found in the fact that Jacob had his physicians embalm Jacob's body rather than the priests
 - 2) We also learn in v. 3 that the Egyptians mourned Jacob for seventy days which was typically reserved for royalty
 - 3) It wasn't until after the seventy days were complete that Jacob was able to take Jacob's body back to Canaan to be buried, and this would have taken another few weeks

- 4) Embalming the body would have preserved the body through this long period until it could be properly buried
2. Joseph received permission from the pharaoh to travel back to Canaan and he was accompanied by a huge royal procession (READ 50:4-11):
 - a. V. 7 tells us that **“all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt”** went along with all of Joseph and his brothers (with the exception of the little ones)
 - b. V. 9 says the procession included **“chariots and horsemen”** and describes it as **“a very great company.”**
 - c. As they approach the land of Canaan, this massive entourage stopped at a threshing floor just west of the Jordan River in the city Atad:
 - 1) This would have likely been a large open-air floored site on the top of a hill used to separate grain from chaff
 - 2) V. 10 tells us their purpose was to mourn Jacob some more:
 - a) They **“lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation”**—the Hebrew form (cognate accusative) along with two adjectives is used to stress the depth of the mourning and emotion
 - b) They did this for another seven days (on top of the seventy days they had already mourned back in Egypt)
 - c) It must have been some sight to behold because the Canaanites in the region saw what was happening and said, **“this is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians”** and even named the place **“Abel-mizraim”** which means the mourning of Egypt
 3. After their mourning was complete, Joseph and his brothers fulfilled Jacob’s wishes, buried him in the land of Canaan, and returned to Egypt (READ 50:12-14)
 4. Burying his father back in the land of Canaan was more than fulfilling a promise to his father; it was a demonstration of his own in the promises of God:
 - a. I say this with certainty because back in chapter 48 when Jacob demanded that Joseph bury him in the land of Canaan, in that same conversation he reminded Joseph that God would bring them all back to the land of Canaan
 - b. Later in our passage this morning, Joseph links his own desire to have his bones taken back to Canaan with God’s promise to bring them back to the land
 - c. I’m going to go out on a limb here and do some speculating, but I believe it’s appropriate:
 - 1) I wonder if Pharaoh and his household, all his royal officials, and those who accompanied Joseph back to the land of Canaan to bury his father knew why it was so important for Jacob to be buried there and not in Egypt
 - 2) There is absolutely no question that Joseph and Jacob made a tremendous impression on Pharaoh and the Egyptians—this is clear when the WHOLE country mourned for seventy days and a massive royal entourage traveled hundreds of miles for weeks to accompany Joseph to bury his father

- 3) It's hard to imagine that neither Joseph nor Jacob ever spoke of or mentioned the promises God made to them because it was central to their lives, and we know Pharaoh himself recognized God's work in Joseph's life (he said so back in chapter 43 when he made Joseph the second highest official in the land and trusted him with saving Egypt)
5. Takeaway: we demonstrate our faith in God's promises by how we observe the death of fellow believers:
 - a. Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 that when a brother or sister in Christ dies, we are not to grieve as the rest of the world does because they are without hope, but instead we are to comfort one another with the promise that since Jesus died and rose again God will raise up those who are in Christ
 - b. Peter said it this way (1 Peter 1:3-5): **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."**
 - c. Our funerals as Christians should serve as a demonstration of the faith we have in the promise of eternal life through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Preaching Dad's funeral

B. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by recognizing God's sovereignty (READ 50:15-21)

1. This is an interesting event because Joseph had shown nothing but grace, mercy and compassion toward his brothers, but after Jacob's death they are fearful that he would retaliate against them (15): **"what if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!"**
2. Many interpret what the brothers say as a fabrication:
 - a. V. 16 says they sent a message to Joseph saying that Jacob commanded them to approach Joseph and deliver a message to him: **"Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they dealt evil against you."**
 - b. Those who hold this view support it by noting that Jacob isn't recorded as saying this anywhere else, and why would Jacob tell the brothers to deliver this message? Why not simply tell Joseph himself?
 - c. They view this so-called message from Jacob as a fabrication by the brothers to save their own skin
3. I don't think this view is unreasonable because there isn't any way to know for sure, but I think it focuses on the wrong thing:

- a. Previous texts reveal that the brothers had been convicted by God of their sin, and even though Joseph reminded them of their sin when he forgave them, there's no record in previous passages that they ever confessed or admitted those sins to Joseph directly
 - b. However, here they do just that:
 - 1) Even if the message from Jacob was fabricated, it stated explicitly that they had sinned against Joseph and even called it "evil"
 - 2) Then, immediately after delivering the message, they themselves call what they did a transgression (sin) and ask for Joseph's forgiveness
 - 3) And, they did this with a tremendous amount of humility—calling themselves **"servants of the God of your father"** and falling down before him and saying, **"Behold, we are your servants."**
 - c. So, the most important thing in this exchange isn't whether or not the brothers fabricated a message from Jacob, but the fact that they finally admitted and confessed their sin directly to Joseph
4. Their fear that Joseph would retaliate clearly wasn't justified because Joseph wasn't interested in retaliation because of his profound understanding of God's sovereignty and how it all fit into the promises of God:
- a. The end of v. 17 tells us that **"Joseph wept then they spoke to him"** and in v. 19 he says, **"Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?"**
 - b. And, like he did when he first revealed himself to his brothers back in chapter 45, he set them at ease by declaring in v. 19, **"you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to do what has happened on this day, to keep many people alive"**
 - c. But, he didn't stop there (20):
 - 1) He encouraged them again: **"so now, do not be afraid."**
 - 2) He declared that he would provide for them and their little ones
 - 3) He **"comforted them and spoke to their heart"**
5. We demonstrate our faith in God's promises by recognizing His sovereignty
- a. As we saw back in chapter 45, and here again, Joseph forgave his brothers for their sins against him because he understood and accepted how God was sovereignly in control of ALL the events of his life, both good and bad
 - b. He demonstrated his faith in God and His promises by recognizing God's sovereignty over his life
 - c. Many Christians struggle from day to day with accepting the situations and circumstances of life they face because they fail to see or understand how God is still in control--they worry, fear, and doubt
 - d. When people look at us is that what they see, or do they see us demonstrating our faith in God and His promises by trusting that He is truly sovereign over every detail and event of our life?

- e. There's a reason why the Bible repeatedly reminds us not to fear but to trust the LORD in everything—it's because God is sovereign and nothing in our lives is out of His control

C. Joseph demonstrated his faith in the promises of God by reminding his brothers of those promises (READ 50:22-26)

1. Jacob died when Joseph was about 40 years old, and the Bible tells us almost nothing about the next 70 years before he died:
 - a. V. 22 tells us he continued to live in Egypt with his brothers
 - b. V. 23 tells us that God blessed him with not just grandkids, but three generations of grandkids
2. As he approached his death, Joseph gathered his brothers together and reminded them of two things and made one final request of them:
 - a. He reminded his brothers that God would take care of them:
 - 1) On two previous occasions, Joseph told his brothers that he himself would provide for them, once during the famine (45:11) and then after their father had died (50:21)
 - 2) On his deathbed, he assured them that God would take care of them after he was gone (24): **"I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you..."** and again in v. 25, **"God will surely take care of you..."**
 - b. He reminded them that God would fulfill His promise to someday bring them back to the land of Canaan (24): **"God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."**
 - c. Finally, like his father before him, he asked that his bones be taken back and buried in the land of Canaan when God returned Israel to the land (25): **"and you shall carry my bones up from here":**
 - 1) We know Joseph wasn't referring to being buried immediately in Canaan, but rather when God returned Israel to the land according to His promise—we know this because Hebrews 11:22 tells that's what Joseph was referring to: **"By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones."**
 - 2) This was fulfilled in Exodus 13:19 when Moses took Joseph's bones with them during the Exodus and in Joshua 24:32 when Joseph's bones were buried in Canaan during the Conquest (READ)
 - 3) Until then, Joseph was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt (26)
3. Takeaway: we demonstrate our faith in God's promises by the hope we leave behind:
 - a. The last thing Joseph did before he died was leave his brothers with hope
 - b. He not only reminded them of God's promises but demonstrated his own faith in God and His promises by instructing them to have his bones taken back to Canaan

- c. If you knew when you were going to die, what would be on your mind? What last words would you share with those around you? Would it have to do with the Gospel and the amazing things God has promised us in Jesus Christ for all eternity?

Conclusion

1. Joseph demonstrated his faith in God and His promises in how he handled Jacob's burial, so much so that all of Egypt was impacted, right up to Pharaoh's household
2. He demonstrated his faith in God and His promises by living with the conviction that God was sovereign over his life and ultimately in control of everything that happened to him
3. Finally, he demonstrated his faith in God and His promises by leaving his brothers with hope and reminding them of God's promises and his own desire to be buried in the land God promised them