

The End of the Beginning

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[0 : 0 0] to you. Well now we're going to turn to our reading for this morning and we are in Genesis for one last time. Genesis chapter 50. If you don't have a Bible with you, we have plenty of visitor Bibles at the side there, so do grab a Bible if you need one. And Genesis chapter 50, that's page 44, if you have one of the visitor Bibles. And as I mentioned, this is our last visit to Genesis. This is Willie's final sermon in the book. And some of you will know that Willie has, well some time ago, worked on a commentary on the book of Genesis and that is soon to be published. Hopefully next month you'll be able to buy a copy of Willie's book on Genesis, so do keep an eye out for that. We will have a special offer, time limited, for those who are part of the church family here, so you need to move quick once it's released. But I've seen early editions of it, it's a superb book and it'll be a great thing for you to take and to read and to mull over this great book of Genesis again. But keep an eye out for that. Let's turn and it's Genesis 50 and we're picking up the reading at verse 15. So Genesis 50 verse 15. When Joseph saw that their father was dead, they said, it may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.

So they sent a message to Joseph saying, your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph, please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin because they did evil to you. And now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.

Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, behold, we are your servants. But Joseph said to them, do not fear for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years and Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation.

[2 : 4 7] The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own. And Joseph said to his brothers, I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear saying, God will surely visit you and you shall carry up my bones from here. So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Amen. Well, may God bless his words to us this morning. Well, do open your Bibles, please, to Genesis chapter 50 and this last section of this long book that we've been studying now for quite a long time, at least this last part of it.

But this is not the end. It's not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning. Those words of Winston Churchill in his famous blood and tears and toil and sweat speech. Some of you may even remember it. November 1942. It was after Montgomery defeated Rommel in the battle of El Alamin, the battle of Egypt, as Churchill called it. It rather aptly describes, I think, this final passage in Genesis because we find ourselves today at the end of what is just the beginning of a far greater story, which of course continues throughout all the pages of Scripture and continues throughout human history, still continues today.

And in one sense, it is the end of Joseph's story. Genesis 50 speaks, as we saw last week, about Jacob's burial. Now it speaks about Joseph's bones. But remember, despite Andrew Lloyd Webber, it's not just Joseph's story. These are the generations of Jacob, is how it began in chapter 37.

Do you remember? It's the account of how Israel's family, Jacob's family, is transformed through their own battle of Egypt, if you like, into a great nation. The servant nation through whom God, as he promised Abraham, would bring blessing to all the peoples of the earth. And far from being the end of that story, this is just the very beginning. It is the genesis of the gospel of God. Began in chapter 1 with the beginning of everything, life itself. But as we saw, it so sadly degenerates into the beginning of sin and therefore of death for mankind. And yet immediately and wonderfully,

remember, came the beginning of hope and the promise of God and the beginning of faith and the church of God in Abraham's family of covenant faith. And then through them, of course, the beginning of Christian mission, as Abraham himself became a proclaimer of God and an intercessor for the pagan nations around him. And we've charted how God's tenacious grace grasped this complex family, this often calamitous family, and refused to let them go. But instead, God's transforming grace all the while is changing his people. Even as through them, he purposes to change this whole wide world.

[6 : 20] And then above all we've seen, haven't we, in these final chapters, we've seen God as the God of triumphant grace, who despite all evil, is working all things for good, for blessing, for salvation.

Do you remember in chapter 45, Joseph says to his brothers, despite all that you did to me, it was God who sent me before you to preserve life, to preserve a remnant on earth, a great number a people of promise. And that's the glorious truth. You see, I could hear once again in chapter 50, verse 20, you meant evil against me, he says, but God meant it for good, for the saving of many. But God. Now, so often that has been the great refrain, hasn't it, through this book. The relentlessness of the sin, the folly of God's covenant people is met with the relentlessness of the mercy and the sheer grace of this covenant God over and over and over again.

So as we come to the end of Genesis and the story of Joseph, let's remind ourselves one last time that the chief subject of all of this hasn't been Joseph, hasn't even been Jacob and his family Israel. It's been God, the God of Jacob and our God also. These words, of course, were first written, they were first heard by the people of Israel under Moses, the church in the wilderness, as Stephen calls them in Acts 7.

[7 : 50] And they were written to remind them about their past, about who they really were. But above all, to teach them about the God to whom they truly belong.

And that's why we have these last few paragraphs in Genesis that are before us this morning, because Moses' concern echoes the concern of Joseph here as he approaches the end of his earthly life. And Joseph has so faithfully served his brothers all his life, well, now he serves them right to the very last.

And he points them once again, doesn't he, to their great God and Savior. And we can't help, can we, but be struck by the extraordinary paradox that this Joseph, whom they had rejected, whom they had tried to kill, that he became their ruler, their Lord.

And yet, to the very end, do you see, he remains also their servant. When they're weak, when they're fearful. And he is constantly, even now, revealing to them the wonders of their God. It's a striking pattern, don't you think? Well, what is this extraordinary servant ruler of God's people? What does he affirm to his brothers about their God at the very close of this amazing story?

[9 : 06] What does Moses, in recording all of this, what does he want his generation? And what does the Holy Spirit want us to have ringing in our ears and our hearts at the very end of this extraordinary book of Genesis?

Well, let's try and summarize it, shall we, under four headings. First, he wants us to fully grasp God's pardon. God's servant, Joseph, here, assures his brothers and us of the completeness of God's pardon for sin.

Look at verse 15. The brothers' reaction is very understandable, isn't it? When they saw their father was dead, they say, well, maybe now Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him. Now, those crimes were many decades in the past now.

But grudges can last a long time, can't they? Especially family grudges can last a lifetime. It's understandable that they were afraid. Joseph had been wonderfully caring, wonderfully generous to them, but they had these nagging doubts, didn't they?

Was it all for our father's sake? And now he's gone. Now will the vengeance come. And they still had guilty consciences. Look at verse 15. They knew they had done evil.

[10 : 26] Verse 17. They had transgressed. They'd sinned against God's law. And they repeat these terms several times. You see in verses 16 and 17, they know they need forgiveness.

And they beg for forgiveness. It seems very likely, I think, that this message, supposedly from their father, was just concocted by them. But even if not, it's clear they needed more influence, they felt, than just their own plea for mercy, because they were very fearful.

And they were guilty. But what was Joseph's reaction, verse 17? He wept. He wept. Joseph weeps a lot in this story, doesn't he?

But they're not tears of weakness. They're tears of love. And yet also of sadness, because after all this time, his brothers still seem to doubt the reality of his love, his commitment for them.

But it's more than that. I think he weeps because they don't seem to grasp what he has more than grasped, which is the wonderful grace and mercy of their father's God, their own God.

[11:33] Am I in the place of God, he says in verse 19? And he turns their eyes again to God, doesn't he? And to all that's happened, to show them that it's been the work of God for their blessing, for their salvation, for the saving of many lives, as the NIV translates it there.

It's God's work, he says. God, our Savior. And he knows that, and so he can assure them of complete forgiveness. This isn't about me, he's saying.

It's about God. It's about God's grace and his mercy, which is infinite. And you must see that. Fear not, he says in verse 21. It's easy, isn't it, I think, to disparage the brothers, to see them as being somehow deficient in their faith.

But don't we often fear? Don't we often have doubts like that? When our sins and our sense of guilt rise up to accuse us, can God really still accept me?

After this, after what I've now done, I know he's promised forgiveness, but couldn't he change his mind? Can I be really sure? Can I know what I'm like?

[12:50] Can I know what I've done? Maybe when you've stumbled badly again into some sin that you know is so wrong, you've not been able to control your tongue, you've lost your temper.

Perhaps you've wrecked a relationship that was close to you. Or maybe you've just given in to your appetites and lost your self-control, maybe in sexual matters, perhaps on the internet or in practice. Or maybe just your past has caught up with you in some other way and something rises up to condemn you and you just wonder, can God possibly still, still really accept me?

And don't we need to hear the words of our wonderful servant brother, our servant brother, to assure us, as our Lord Jesus does, so constantly fear not, he says, fear not, little flock.

It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Verse 21 says, Joseph spoke kindly to them and comforted them.

[13:57] Literally, it says there, he spoke to their heart, to their heart. Exactly the words that the Lord himself so often speaks to his people when he restores them.

Hosea chapter 2, I will allure her and speak tenderly, he says, to Israel's heart. It's the wonderful words in Isaiah chapter 40 to remember when the Lord says, comfort ye, comfort ye my people. And he tells his prophet to speak tenderly to Jerusalem, speak to her heart and tell her what? Her iniquity is pardoned. You see, God knows, doesn't he, that we need constant assurance to our hearts about the completeness of his pardon to us.

And he does speak to our hearts to do just that. John the apostle says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, all of it.

And that's a great assurance, isn't it, that he speaks to our hearts every time, every time we come to the Lord's table and we take the bread and the wine in our hands and in our mouth. We're proclaiming, says Paul, that marvelous truth.

[15:13] We're reminding God of his promise to do that, to be faithful and just, to forgive us our sins on account of Christ's death. And God remembers the covenant in his blood and the visible words of the bread and the wine.

They speak to our hearts, don't they, to assure us of his pardon, complete. What a great word that must have been for Moses to remind his people of.

Think of all their sin, all their rebellion in the wilderness and they're on the brink of the land and he's reminded of the great pardon of their God. Fear not, verse 21, I will provide for you and for your little ones.

Do you see how Joseph was a living demonstration before their very eyes of the power of God's grace, of what it can do in the human heart? How much easier it must have been for his brothers to believe in a God of grace and mercy when they saw that very grace and mercy at work in God's servant with their own eyes and heard it with their own ears.

And that's worth remembering too for us, isn't it? Because that's why the apostle tells us, you in the church be tender hearted, forgiving one another as in Christ, God forgave you.

[16 : 32] If our church, if our covenant family is a place where that spirit prevails, won't we also be so much more assured of God's complete pardon for our lives when we're fearful, when we see that grace of work in our brothers and sisters?

He wants us to see God's pardon. And secondly, you see, Joseph wants to assure his brothers of God's purpose, which is a wonderfully comforting purpose despite all the faults that his servants will never be free from.

The God-servant Joseph assures his brothers and assures us of the comfort that is in God's purpose of salvation. Even when sin, even when evil seems to be rampant in the world and even in the church.

Look at verse 20. It's rightly famous. And in many ways, really, it is the climax of the whole of the Joseph story, but also of the whole of the book of Genesis. Because from the high point at the very end of chapter 1 and 2 of Genesis, it's all downhill, isn't it?

We have that brief glimpse of the glory of God in creation. And then immediately, it turns into a story of rebellion, of sin, of corruption, of murder, of destruction, and on and on.

[17 : 45] And then we have a fresh start after Noah, but again, very quickly, we're right back into the disaster of Babel. Even the story of Abraham. Well, we've seen so quickly, haven't we, by Genesis chapter 34, how dirty it is.

Chapter 38. God's own chosen family are often bad. They're even worse than the pagans round about them. And of course, what they do to Joseph, their own brother, perhaps is the lowest point of all.

But God sent Joseph ahead of them. And Joseph, the servant of God, had learned his God, moves in a mysterious way to perform his wonders.

That far from being thwarted by evil, rather, in fact, he even uses the worst evil, the worst rebellion of man, to redound to his greater glory and to the ultimate glory and blessing for his people.

And you see, Joseph had come to grasp that the more that you are taken up in and caught up in God's story, the more you will share in that extraordinary willing suffering of the long-suffering Savior God himself, the God of grace.

[19 : 04] And that's why he can say here in verse 20 with such confidence, you meant evil against men, but God meant it for good. Because he knows it's not just about me and about my life, it's about God's marvelous plan, it's about God's purpose for many, for saving many lives.

And you see, when you come to see your own life, yours and mine, and everything else in the world as part of something so much bigger, then you begin to see the whole world very differently, don't you?

And Joseph's eyes had been open to the wonders of God's powerful hand of providence, always at work, always accomplishing his perfect purpose, his way.

And he wanted his brothers to know that, to know the comfort that that brings in life. That God's purpose will not be thwarted, not ever. Not even by our own mistakes and our folly and our sinfulness, not even by our outright sin and evil.

That was the message, wasn't it? That the apostles came to understand after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Because before that, they thought his death was a total disaster.

[20 : 19] The first Easter morning had no hallelujahs, did it? Just weeping, confusion, fear. But later, of course, they could see God's wonderful purpose working through that most terrible evil of all.

Jesus, says Peter, whom you crucified, God raised up. Herod and Pilate and others, all their evil. It just did what God's hand had purposed to take place, to work his great wonders of salvation.

Friends, what a wonderful comfort that is to us. What a liberation it is to have our eyes opened to that great truth, especially in times of darkness, especially in times of great pain, of agony, of fear.

To know that however evil things may seem to be to us, God is at work in it all and over it all and through it all working his wonders.

William Cooper, who wrote the hymn that we sang there before the sermon, John Newton's great friend, he suffered from terrible depression. And in fact, it was just as he sank into a blanket of darkness from which actually he never fully recovered that he wrote the words of that hymn, God Moves, in a mysterious way.

[21 : 39] Let me read some again. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and will break in blessing on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace. Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face. His purposes will ripen fast.

Unfolding every hour, the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower. Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan his work in vain.

But God is his own interpreter and he will make it plain. And you see, God had made it plain to Joseph and what a glorious testimony he had because of that.

And he will make things plain to us also. Although it may be that like Joseph, it takes many, many, many years. Joseph wasn't glibly singing those things down in the pit back in chapter 37, was he? [22 : 43] Or in the prison. And that actually reminds us, doesn't it, to be careful about how we apply that kind of text. One thing for ourselves to look back over our own experience of God's grace working wonders through dark days and difficult days.

Quite another thing, isn't it, to quote those sort of things glibly to somebody who's right in the middle of the darkness. Don't do that. That's crass. It's insensitive. But to hear the testimony of a wounded saint about how God has worked wonders of grace through their life, turning clouds of dread into showers of mercy, is a wonderful thing as it is to see in Scripture all the way through the story of how God's great redemption is marked by that pattern so, so often.

What a great comfort that is to us as feeble saints. You see, the more you learn to walk with God in His service, the more you find yourself taken up in His ways, we'll realize that they often do perplex us and pain us.

But the more we do that in trusting faith, the more we'll rejoice in the comfort of knowing His purpose, knowing His providence, knowing that even when He does seem to be frowning upon us, it does hide a wonderfully smiling face of grace and mercy always, always.

And our certainty in His wonderfully comforting purpose will guard us, will keep us through many difficult mysteries in the present time. And Joseph's saying to his brothers, never forget the wonderful comfort of God's purpose for all who are His.

[24 : 27] And nor must we ever forget God's promise, which is a wonderfully certain promise despite the frailty that His servants so often feel. And that's the third thing that Joseph points his brother to here in verses 22 to 26.

It's the certainty of God's promise to His saints, His people, His servants. And even in the face of death itself, there is a glorious future for everyone, everyone, who are the people of the God of Israel.

I don't know about you, but I like a book with a happy ending. If I'm on hold and I'm reading a novel and it ends with the hero's death, it sort of spoils my holiday mood.

I don't like that. So what about the book of Genesis? Is there a happy ending? Well, in one sense, it's a tragic story, isn't it? But a sad end. My father's notes put this very succinctly.

The first words of Genesis were, in the beginning, God. Words of infinite meaning and possibility and hope. The last words, a coffin in Egypt.

[25 : 35] And that's telling, isn't it? And it's chilling. The book begins with the glory of God's creation. It ends in the grave of man's corruption. Reminds us of those genealogies.

Remember, back in Genesis 5, Adam fathered Seth and he died and Seth fathered Enosh and he died and he died and he died and on and on it goes. He died, he died, he died. And here we are at the very end of the book of Genesis and the very last verse and what happens?

Joseph dies too. The book that opens with life ends with death. But you see, the end of Genesis is not the end of the story, is it?

And that's what Joseph is crying out to us from his own deathbed. This is just the end of the beginning, he's saying. It's but one brief chapter in a far greater story which doesn't end in death but in life.

Remember God's promise of life, he's saying to his brothers. The covenant promise which is certain. It cannot fail and God will do all that he has promised and he will dwell with us forever.

[26 : 44] Isn't it wonderful to see, see where Joseph's heart really is invested. It so often is at the end of a life, isn't it, where we see what somebody has really lived for, what has really been important for that person.

It's often very telling what they want at their funeral. I did it my way. Apparently the most common song that people want played at their funeral. Rebellion, right to the last.

Oh, you hear stories of people who want their ashes scattered on the football pitch of the team that has just really been their life and indeed their God all the way through. It's tragic, isn't it? Pathetic. Look how different it is for Joseph here, this man.

See, in one sense he is a man who had everything that earth could give him. The very structure of these verses, if you look at them, they're making that point. Verses 22 and verse 26 bracket this section with a reference to his age.

He was 110 and the scholars tell us that was the age of perfect blessing in Egyptian thinking. As was living to see the third generation of your family.

[27 : 48] That's what verse 23 tells us. What it's saying is here is a man who in earthly terms had it all. But what really gripped his heart when he reaches the end is at the very heart of that last paragraph.

Look at it in verses 24 and 25. What is it? It's the promise of God. Do you see? The covenant swore into Abraham and Isaac and Jacob of a future. What had God promised Abraham?

Do you remember? Four things in Genesis 12. A people like the sand of the seashore and a place, the land of God's own dwelling and God's presence and blessing and in protection of his people and God's plan through them to bless all the earth through his seed.

And you see that is exactly what Joseph turns his brothers' minds and hearts to right here at the last. You see he speaks about God's people coming back to his chosen place in the land.

Verse 24. And in verse 25 about God's presence with them. Visiting them to save them. And of God's plan going forward as he foretells the exodus.

[28 : 55] And he says I will have a part in that future. That's what verse 25 means. Take my bones with you. You see just like Jacob his last supreme confession of faith is in the promise of an everlasting home and an everlasting future himself with God.

He wants his bones planted in the land of promise in the place of his inheritance so that he also would receive his inheritance along with God's people. We saw that with Jacob last week.

The true hope for all the patriarchs was for a bodily future in a real and tangible world with God himself dwelling with his people forever.

Hebrews 11 tells us that quite plainly. They were seeking a homeland. They were seeking a better country a heavenly country in a city built by God himself where God himself dwells.

And that chapter in Hebrews 11 goes right on doesn't it to sum up Joseph's life in just one verse just as Jacob's. By faith Joseph at the end of his life made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave direction concerning his bones.

[30 : 12] I think we could fairly summarize that and say that Joseph's dying words were focused on God's great redemption to come and on the great resurrection to come. And that's no light thing is it to be a man who has it all in life the ruler of the empire of the world but for your heart to be so taken up with the promise of God for the future that all you talk about when death is staring you in the face is not your wealth is not your legacy is not any of these things but it's the future an inheritance with the people of God and that was Joseph's message to his brothers and of course to the Israelites many many years later on the brink of the promised land as they read this as these words were in their minds as they themselves were carrying that very coffin to go with them.

Moses is saying see how God does fulfill his promises. That's what these verses remind them 400 years later. So you keep looking to the future in faith because this story isn't over yet.

All he has promised he shall fulfill yet even bringing life to these very bones that you are carrying with you in the exodus. So yes the end of this book is a coffin in Egypt but even there do you see there's a promise isn't there for the certain future.

And yes Moses' last book Deuteronomy ends with another death of God's servant of Moses himself. And Joshua ends with another death of Joshua.

And first the chronicles end don't they ultimately with the death of even David the great king and on and on it goes until you come to the end of Matthew's gospel and we find another death and another tomb in the promised land in the burial of God's servant Jesus.

[32 : 21] But at last that book doesn't end there does it? In death but in resurrection the first fruits of the promised of everlasting life fulfilled at last in human flesh.

but still the story's not over yet is it for us? And we too still need God's servant to point us to the future to the ultimate fulfillment of all God's people of all this certain promise of God for us.

But it's not yet says Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 Christ is the first fruits yes but only at his coming shall all who are his rise at last to life with him but they shall they shall it's a real promise it's certain and on that day friends death will be no more every tear will be wiped away isn't that wonderful? It's so very powerful isn't it it's so wonderful when someone who is facing death imminently themselves when they're so taken up with assuring their brothers and sisters of the certainty of God's great promise of the future pointing others to the glorious gospel I'll never forget visiting David early some of you will remember David just not long before he died he'd had terminal cancer he was being treated with all these things and he was in a lot of pain really it was difficult and I went to see him and he was listening on an old tape recorder to songs by Beverly Shea Billy Graham's singer singing about Jesus and I prayed with him and I'd hardly stopped praying and I was about to get up when he started praying but he wasn't praying for himself he was praying for me he was praying for my family he was praying for our church he was asking the Lord that the gospel that changed him would go on being heard by others

David was a rabid bitter communist an atheist but he was wonderfully converted and when he was dying his heart was full of everything that mattered most the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and that it be proclaimed to others that was Joseph here I'm about to die he says but God will visit you and bring you to the land of promise and the future of promise wonderfully echoing isn't it the words of the Lord Jesus in the upper room to his brothers do you remember as he was about to die let not your hearts be troubled believe in God believe also in me I'm going to prepare a place for you that brings me to the final word really as we come to a close because surely here in all this passage as in this whole marvelous story the writer wants us to see doesn't he

[35 : 28] God's pattern which is a wonderfully Christ-like pattern above all I think we see it in the forsakenness of his servant Joseph but God's servant Joseph points his brothers and us to the Christ because surely he is a pattern isn't he of the Savior who is to come we've seen so many ways haven't we in which Joseph's life foreshadows and echoes the great servant of the Lord the Lord Jesus in his rejection by his own family and yet all God's blessing being being manifest upon him from earliest days as he grew in stature and favor with man and his extraordinary mission going before his brothers to become their Savior indeed to become their Lord so that they do at last bow the knee to him just as their dreams foretold remember and in his wonderful mercy and grace forgiving forgiving those who had breathed murder against him almost everything in

Joseph's life powerfully proclaims the saving mercy of God which came at last of course in its fullness in the Lord Jesus himself why was that well it's because he was a man conformed to the image of his God listen to what the book of Hebrews says about Jesus it was fitting that he from whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering and he goes on he is not ashamed to call them brothers and he delivers these brothers we're told from the fear of death and therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of his people he learned obedience through what he suffered and thus he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him the evil done to him issued in the saving of many lives multitudes multitudes that no man can number forever and ever don't you think Joseph's life was remarkably Jesus shaped we shouldn't be surprised by that should we because all all who are taken up into God's story all whose hearts thrill with his promise will find their experience is conformed to the image of his son because they too are united to the same savior by the same faith like Joseph long centuries before Jesus came or whether for ourselves long after Jesus is risen from the dead we're all part aren't we of the same story the same great story yes our calling is different from Joseph's we don't have a unique role in preserving God's covenant seed until the Christ would come in the flesh but we are likewise called to live our lives as true servants of God's promise by what we speak of that grace to people's hearts and by how we shine that grace out from our own hearts as

Joseph did in our weeping with others as well as our words with others and that's the Christ like pattern isn't it of every true every fruitful servant from the very beginning of the story here in Genesis all the way to the end of the Bible and all the to the end of the world till the Lord Jesus comes we all share in this Genesis shaped call to be servants of our Lord and Savior who live and who love to assure our brothers and sisters of God's complete pardon for sin to assure them of his wonderfully comforting purpose of salvation and to point others to that certain promise of a future for all who are his forever in the presence of the Lord that's what we want to be isn't it and friends if

we live like that and if we die like that in the
Christ like pattern of this man Joseph then we also will have lived well and died well by faith pointing
to the Lord Jesus Christ the great promise of his future well may the gospel of Genesis go on
blessing our hearts as we seek to live it today let's pray help us Lord we pray to live and to die
worthy of your great name the name by which you've called us to live for your great purpose and to
hold that great promise of life everlasting to this world so lead us Lord our great shepherd lead us
who are indeed a feeble flock lead us every step of the way so that our lives may indeed be lives
that bring praise and honor praise and honor to your name all the days of our lives and then forever
in your glorious presence with joy inexpressible forever and ever amen to