

Well, it's good to be back among the land of the living. I had been down, and I'm so grateful for Kent Stainback at the last second to step in and do such a wonderful job. I'm so grateful, though, to at least be able to be back with you, so for just this one Sunday after the service, I won't be able to kiss you on the lips, just to let you know that.

*[Laughter]*

Okay, can you hear me now? Okay. All right. Kent wants to know if I can do that over, mentioning his name, I guess, and bragging on him around the world on the Internet. We are in the Book of Genesis, right? We're in Genesis 50. If you happen to be visiting today, we're thrilled you're here, and you're catching us at the end of a verse-by-verse study of the Book of Genesis that has taken us a couple of years, at least, to go through this book. We've finally come now to the last chapter, although we're not going to be able to finish it all today, so you've got to come back the next Lord's day. But, we're in Genesis 50, and we're going to be looking at verses 1-14 today. The title of this message is, "A Time to Weep, A Time to Mourn." How true to life this is.

I want to begin by reading the passage for you. I trust you have your Bible in front of you and open. You'll always get so much more out of the message as you have a Bible open in front of you. The Word of God reads, "Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him. Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father, so the physicians embalmed Israel. Forty days are required for it, for such is the period required for embalming, and the Egyptians wept for him 70 days. When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh saying, 'If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying: My father made me swear, saying, behold, I'm about to die: In my grave, which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me. Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, then I will return.' Pharaoh said, 'Go up and bury your father as he made you swear.' Joseph went up to bury his father and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the household of Joseph, and his brothers, and his father's household. They left only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds in the land of Goshen.

There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great company. When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation, and he observed seven days' mourning for his father. Now, when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the morning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, 'This is a grievous morning for the Egyptians.' Therefore, it was named Abelmizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. Thus, his sons did for him as he had charged them, for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had brought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father." This is the reading of God's inspired Word. It has much to say to us today. Let us go to Him in prayer.

Father, we thank you that we are not left to live our Christian lives on just feelings or the traditions of men, or on dreams or visions, or things like this that have no substance, but that you have left us with your written Word that your Holy Spirit inspired every text that is recorded for us in the Bible, and it is pure truth, unvarnished, unadulterated truth. Every passage of Scripture we believe is profitable for us, and so I pray as we look at this scene of the burial of Jacob that you would speak directly to us, and that there would be much for us to take home with us as we would live this out. Father, we ask now for your assistance, the ministry of the Holy Spirit to be actively at work in both the preacher and the listener, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The title of this message is, "A Time to Weep, A Time to Mourn." In these verses, we see the burial of Jacob in the land of Canaan, and, most specifically, we see the weeping and the mourning and the sorrow, the heartrending sorrow of Joseph and his brothers over the death of Jacob, and we learn from these verses that even we as believers are not exempt from the loss of loved ones, and from the sorrows of life. Being a Christian does not mean that we have no trouble and no trials, neither does it mean that we never have to bury our parents or face difficult times. We too will suffer just like the world suffers, over many things that we hold in common. Throughout the Bible, believers are told that they will suffer much in this world. Job suffered the loss of his entire wealth, and then he suffered the loss of seven sons and three daughters all at once, and then he was inflicted with boils all over his body, and he was the most righteous man on the face of the Earth by God's own estimate.

Stephen was stoned to death for simply preaching the Bible. James was put to death with a sword. Daniel ended up in the lion's den. Ezekiel was taken hostage and carried to a foreign land where he lived in exile. Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned, and was abducted and taken to Egypt. John was confined to the Isle of Patmos, where he suffered hard labor in basically a concentration camp. Time does not permit us to walk through the trials and tribulations of the apostle, Paul, but he endured beatings and imprisonment, lashes with the whip and with rods, shipwrecked. He was literally drug through the streets of Philippi. Job said, "Man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward." Solomon said, "There is an appointed time for everything," that God in his sovereignty has appointed what will take place in our lives as it unfolds. There is an appointed time for everything, and there is a time for every event under heaven; a time to weep, and a time to mourn. These have been sovereignly foreordained by God for the schedule of our lives.

Jesus acknowledged in this world you shall have tribulation, and Paul tells us to weep with those who weep. We're actually commanded to weep with others in their weeping, and James says, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials," not *if* you encounter them, but when you encounter them. Even Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus, and Isaiah records of Jesus that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The Bible tells it like it is. The Bible never sugarcoats its message. The Bible tells us not necessarily what we want to hear at all times but what we need to hear, so that we can live our lives productively, and what the Bible teaches us is that as we live our Christian lives in this world, there will be much difficulty, and there will be trials, and there will even be the loss of loved ones, even our parents.

---

This is exactly where Joseph and his brothers find themselves in this passage, that even as believers, they are suffering with deep sorrow over the death of their father, Jacob. The same would be true for you, as well, my friend. The time will come for you to face sorrows in this life. You may even be in the midst of such times. The Christian life is not a smooth ride to glory. We don't cruise through this life to glory. The road to heaven is uphill; at times, it is rough, and it is met with many difficulties. That is the world in which we find ourselves, and that is the world in which Joseph and his brothers find themselves as the time has now come to bury their father. It's not a happy occasion. It is an occasion of deep pain and sorrow, so let's walk through this passage together. It has much to say to us. This is where we live.

The first thing I want you to note in Verse 1 is the affection of Joseph. We read in Verse 1 that Joseph fell on his father's face. What has happened at the end of the previous chapter is Jacob has just died. He has breathed his last. Obviously, Joseph, who has been separated from his father for those many years, and has now been reunited with his father, he's standing right at the head of the deathbed, and, when his eyes close and he breathes his last, Joseph just emotionally collapses and he falls on the face of his father. Joseph is not a stoic. He's not immune to feeling the loss here. He just collapses and feels emotional sorrow, and this is one of the great sorrows of life, to lose a parent. I mean, there is an emptiness here that cannot be replaced. There is a sense of loss of security. It's almost as if the rug has been pulled out from underneath, and the one who has brought you into this world is now removed and there is a sense of loneliness. There is a sense of, "I am now here by myself without my father." It says that he wept, he wept over him uncontrollably, just bawling with tears, and then we read, "And kissed him." He just began to smother with kisses again and again and again the lifeless face and body of his father as it lay there, as if, "I just can't let him go."

For the last 17 years, Joseph and Jacob have been reunited. You'll recall that there was that time of separation after Joseph as a teenager was taken down to Egypt, and they did not see each other for many, many years until they are finally reunited. As we preach through Genesis and we go from narrative to narrative to narrative, sometimes we're not aware of the timespan between one story to the next story to the next story. You just simply need to know that since Joseph and Jacob have been reunited now in Egypt, it's been a total of 17 years. I mean, their hearts have been welded together, they have been cemented together in a bond of fatherly and son affection for each other, and now the father is gone. The loss of a father is a monumental experience for anyone to go through, especially if you had a good father who cared for you. I have suffered the loss of both of my parents, and I performed both of their funerals, and it does leave a great emptiness on the inside that is hard to fill back up. By way of application to you today, I would say this, that for those of you who still have parents alive, you need to fall on their face and smother them with kisses now while you can, because the time will come when they will breathe their last and you will be unable to express your love and your devotion to them. The Fifth Commandment says to honor your father and mother, and this is a commandment from God, and it will be well with your soul as you continue to love a

---

father or a mother that is still alive. May you heed that exhortation and even call a father today, if need be.

The second thing I want you to notice in Verse 2, the preparation for burial, Verses 2-3. In Verse 2, we read Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father. Joseph takes charge. Joseph is not the eldest brother, he is not the oldest brother, but he is now the point man. He is over the nation of Egypt, and he is certainly over his 11 other brothers, and he takes command. In fact, when it says Joseph commanded, that Hebrew word means he ordered, he charged the servants, the physicians to embalm his father. Now, the usual practice for burial among the Hebrew people was to bury their deceased loved one the very day that they died, but the Egyptians had a different practice, and the Egyptians embalmed their deceased loved ones, and Joseph is the prime minister of Egypt. It is only natural that he would now follow the practices of the land of the people where he lives. However, the Egyptians carried out embalming as a cultic practice, a false religion. They believed in the afterlife, and they believed that embalming the body would guarantee the success of the afterlife for the one who has died. They also had the embalming process carried out by cultic priests – false teachers, false prophets.

Joseph will have none of that, and so here, though he will practice embalming as an Egyptian now, he has the physicians do it. He does not have the cultic priests carry this out. The historical background on this might be a little helpful to us right now. The Egyptians believed in the afterlife, as I've already said, and all of this was shaped by the cult of Osiris, which was a false god. It taught that the body of the deceased must be preserved if that person is to enjoy the afterlife, and so it would depend on your station in life what kind of embalming you were able to do. If you were poor, then you merely washed the body and dried it in the sun. If you had a little bit more money, you would pack the body with salt. If you had a little bit more money, then you would be one who would inject juniper oil with salt into the body. But the rich, they were the ones who could afford this whole process, and I'm not going to go through the embalming process because I'm a very sensitive man, and it's a grisly procedure, and I read about it this week.

But, suffice to say they would drain the fluids out of the body, and they would put fluids in, and then they would wrap the body in linen cloths, which is the process of mummifying the body. It was believed that that would guarantee them a successful journey to their destination after death. In fact, many pharaohs would be put into a ship, embalmed, mummified, and put into a boat that they would be able to sail into the horizon of the future, and go to a happy life. That was the practice of the Egyptians. We read at the end of Verse 2, "So the physicians embalmed Israel," though of course Joseph has no such pagan beliefs or religious superstitions, but, nevertheless, has his father embalmed. Verse 3, "Now 40 days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming." It was a very detailed procedure, as I've said, and I'm going to spare us all those gory details. At the end of Verse 3, "The Egyptians wept for him 70 days."

The whole nation went into a state of mourning over this man that they've never met, and this probably is to assume that Pharaoh has issued a day, or really a 70-day period of

mourning, and the whole nation basically shuts down. Whenever a pharaoh would die, it would be a 72-day period of mourning, and so for this to read 70 days underscores the importance of Joseph, how he has arisen to this high place of prominence to be prime minister of Egypt, and how the people looked up to him and how Pharaoh had the highest regard for Joseph because of the excellence with which he administrated the affairs of the nation. So, if your father now dies, we want to honor him in this foreign land, so the 70 days actually includes the 30 days past the 40 days of embalming, so it's a total of 70 days.

Now, I want to tap the brakes here just for a moment and I want to talk about life after death. We talked about that last time but I want to talk about it again, and I want to quickly give you seven truths about life after death. As you hear these, these are all drawn from Scripture, I don't have time to go give all the cross-references, but number one, the soul immediately departs from the body. At the moment of death, the soul immediately departs from the body. Number two, the soul of a believer goes immediately into the presence of God fully conscious. You will never be more awake and alert five seconds after you die. You will be fully awake and alert, in the immediate presence of God. Third, the soul of an unbeliever goes immediately into eternal punishment fully conscious. There is no halfway house, there is no purgatory, there is no second chance. For an unbeliever to die, immediately they wake up in the lake of fire and brimstone. Fourth, the body goes into the grave, or into its final temporal resting place. Whenever there is a funeral, there is the body, and the graveside will be performed and the body is put into the ground, though the soul is not there. The soul has gone either to God or to hell.

Fifth, the body will be raised at the end of the age in the resurrection. At the end of the age, there is going to be a great resurrection, and when Jesus comes back, he'll give a shout and every grave will open, and every buried body will be instantly and immediately resurrected and come out of that grave. Sixth, the body of believers will be raised to a resurrection of life with a new body, and, in this new resurrection body, it will be perfectly adapted for the new environment in Heaven, such that this new body will never grow tired, it will never grow weary, that we will be able to worship God forever and ever and ever throughout all of the ages to come. In this new body, there will be a heightened sense of pleasure and a heightened sense of joy within our body, such that we will eat from the tree of life and drink from the river of life with pleasures 10,000 times 10,000, and we with eyes will behold the glory of the Lord, Jesus Christ with glorified, resurrected eyes. Seventh, the body of unbelievers will be raised to a resurrection of judgment with a new body, and it will be a new body that will be perfectly adapted for their new environment in the lake of fire and brimstone. It is a body that will never be consumed by the flames. It is a body that will never perish. It will be an immortal body now suited for the flames of hell. It would almost be as if they're in an asbestos suit of some sort, and be able to endure all of the flames, yet with a heightened sense of the affliction that will be felt in the body.

Now, we as Christians do not believe in pagan beliefs about the afterlife. We believe what the Bible has said to us concerning what takes place at the time of death and immediately after death. I want to throw this in, as well, which I said at the early service

that just flashed into my mind, what happens to a Christian who commits suicide? A Christian can commit suicide, Christians do commit suicide, so where do they go? Well, the answer is if they're a true Christian, they have eternal life and they will go immediately into the presence of God. It is a Catholic heresy that if a Christian commits suicide, that they go to purgatory, or that they go to hell, and that is not true. Suicide is an awful sin that inflicts pain on the family and friends, and it is never to be excused, but some of you here today perhaps have had to go through that dark valley with a family member or a loved one. You need to know if they are a genuine believe in Jesus Christ, that none of his sheep will ever perish. Let's keep moving through this passage. It's very relevant.

Third, I want you to see beginning in Verse 4 the permission of Pharaoh. There is much for us to learn here. There is one more matter, and that is burying Jacob in Canaan, but they're living in Egypt and Joseph is prime minister of Egypt. He is not actually allowed to leave the country, because you're in charge of the country. You're presiding over the entire nation, and so you just can't leave the nation unless there is permission granted from Pharaoh. We read in Verse 4, "When the days of mourning for him were past," referring to the 70 days of mourning, "Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh." Now, that refers to Pharaoh's advisors, his counselors, his inner circle, his power team. He spoke to Pharaoh's household and he said this, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please," and I underscore the word *please*, "Please speak to Pharaoh." Now, we're left to speculate why Joseph would not go directly to Pharaoh, and the answer is not given to us. Perhaps the best plausible explanation is that he is hesitant to go directly to Pharaoh because it will put Pharaoh in a very awkward position if Pharaoh says no, and so there is a buffer zone here.

Joseph speaks to his advisors and says to his advisors, "Go to Pharaoh," and "To lay the matter in front of them," but Joseph is holding this with an open hand and says, "Please." This is what he says to say to Pharaoh, "My father made me swear saying," Verse 5, "Behold, I am about to die." At that point, he knew that his strength was leaving him and Jacob was about to die. He is on his deathbed, so, "Behold, I am about to die. In my grave, which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me. Now, therefore, please," the second time this word is used, "Please let me go up," up meaning north from Egypt to Canaan, "and bury my father, and then I will return." He humbly requests permission to leave the country to go bury his father in Canaan. Now, this brings up two things. Number one, the importance of the land, the importance of the land of Canaan, because when God first called Abraham, who was then Abram, the land was a big deal to God, so it was a big deal to Jacob where he was going to be buried in the land of Canaan because the land of Canaan was a big deal to God. Therefore, it was a big deal to Jacob.

In Genesis 12:1, the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country to the land, which I will show you and I will make you a great nation." In other words, you're not allowed to go live wherever you want to live. "I have a designated, chosen land and I will lead you there and you are to live there," and then God appeared to Abram a second time, and in Genesis 13, 14, God says, "Lift up your eyes, for all the land which you see, I will give it

---

to you. Just open your eyes, look at the land. I'm going to give this to you." Then, in Genesis 15:7, a third time God appears to Abram and says, "I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land, to possess it." Then, if that was not enough, a fourth time God reappears to Abram, and in Genesis 17:8, God says to Abram, "I will give you all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." I mean, this is critically important to God, the land, and so, therefore, it was important to Jacob, and God will appear to Jacob twice, and to underscore the importance of the land. Genesis 28:13, "I am the Lord, the God of your father, Abraham, the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land." I mean, God will not let this go. He is focused upon Israel living in the land.

Then, again, Genesis 35:11, God appears to Jacob and God says, "I am God Almighty." That would get my attention. "The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." This is why Jacob is making this deathbed request to, "Bury me in the land," because it is a designated portion of land that God has promised to give to his covenant people. It is strategically located, really, at the intersection of the globe, at the crossing points of Europe and Asia and Africa. This little strip of land is the size, I've told you, of Dallas-Fort Worth. It's a tiny little piece of land, and yet even to this day, world politics and world events just continue to circle around that tiny little piece of land. It underscores the importance of the land. It was in this land that God sent his son to be born in Bethlehem. It was in this land that Jesus lived and taught. It was in this land that Jesus was crucified upon the cross. It was in this land that Jesus was buried, was raised from the dead. It was from this land that Jesus ascended back to Heaven. It will be to this land that Jesus will return at his second coming. He's not coming to New York, he's not coming to London, he's not coming to Johannesburg. He is coming to the Mount of Olives in the land that God has promised to give to Israel.

I was once riding in the back seat of a car, headed to speak at a conference with one of the most preeminent theologians of our day named Dr. Walt Kaiser, president of Trinity Evangelical Theological seminary, who has written numerous books that we continue to use to this day in seminaries on just how to interpret the Bible. I said, "Dr. Kaiser, we've got about ten minutes until we arrive where we're preaching. Give me your best reason for premillennialism, just put down the ace of spades." He said, "The land, the promise of the land." He said, "We can't allegorize that. We can't make it to be something other than that piece of dirt there that God has promised to give to Israel, and how amazing it is they're in that land right now, as it will be in the last days," so the land is a big deal to God, the land became a big deal to Jacob, so the land was a big deal to Joseph. He said, "I would like permission to go to the land to bury my father." In Verse 6, Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear," and he granted him permission.

Now, with every passage of Scripture, all Scripture is profitable, is relevant for our lives, so what do you think we should learn from this just for our daily Christian lives? I think what we learn from this, as Joseph is under the authority of Pharaoh, that he humbly requests permission and prefaces it with, "Please," to be able to leave the country. This is

the way in our Christian life that those who are under authority should approach those who are over authority. This is how a worker should approach his employer. This is the way a wife should approach her husband. This is the way children should approach their parents. This is the way church members should approach elders. This is the way citizens should approach government officials. What we see here is Joseph humbling himself and seeking permission to pursue a course of action. He's not demanding, and he's not just going off and doing it without permission. He is setting before us an example in Godly Christian living. Learn this, that a humble posture is always the best posture, that an open, empty hand is the best hand to receive what you desire. A clenched fist cannot receive anything. A soft, gentle request is always better than a loud, haranguing demand. That's just even human nature. If you want something from someone above you, humble yourself and make the request. That's what we see Joseph doing here. Now let's continue to Verse 7.

Fourth, I want you to see the excursion for Canaan. We read in Verse 7, "Joseph went up to bury his father," *went up* meaning north, and there are eight layers of this national funeral procession that I want you to see. I mean, this is impressive. This is really a spectacular sight. I remember watching on television a few years ago when George Bush, President 41, died. His body was flown to College Station and put into a car, and there was this extraordinary procession that led him to where he was to be buried. I mean, I had tears. I had goosebumps as I watched this grand procession, and that's something of what we see here. Let me point out these eight layers to you in Verses 7-9. The first is Joseph himself. He will lead the procession, and, with him, all the servants of Pharaoh. This refers to the attendants in Pharaoh's palace, and then third, the elders of his household, referring to Pharaoh's household. This refers to all of Pharaoh's advisors and counselors, his inner circle. Then, fourth, we read, "And all the elders of the land of Egypt." That's a staggering statement. This is all the national leaders who preside outside of Pharaoh's household. These are high-ranking authority figures in Egypt.

These are prominent figures, and please note the word *all*, A-L-L, all the elders of the land of Egypt, and that word will be repeated in Verse 8, and all the household of Joseph. This includes all of his advisors, and all of his counselors because, remember, he is the administrator, the prime minister who is running the nation, and would also include Ephraim and Manasseh, and then sixth, his brothers, that's all 11 of them, and then seven, his father's household. This is Jacob's sons' wives and their adult children, and any servants that they have. Then, at the end of Verse 8, they left only their little ones, and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen. They did that as an indicator to Pharaoh, "We're coming back," I mean, "We're leaving a deposit here, in essence, in Egypt. We'll be back." Then, when we come to Verse 9, it's the eighth layer of this procession, "There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen." This is a military escort. This is a sign of a very important, prominent man is being buried. This is a national funeral, and a show of respect and honor for Joseph, as well as for Jacob.

Then, Verse 9 concludes, please note this, "And it was a very great company." I mean, not just that it was a company, the word *company* here means just a very large number, host of people, but it was not just a company, it was a great company. The word *great*

---

here is the word that's translated throughout the Old Testament as glory, the Glory of God, which means the weightiness of God. The more weight a businessman had meant he had more silver, more gold, he was a weightier influence in the community. That's the word that's used here, a very imposing, weighty company. But, as Moses writes this, it was a very great company. The word *very* here means exceedingly, and so this was a quite a spectacular scene. I mean, Joseph rode first in front of the wagon carrying Jacob's embalmed body. I mean, I've driven in funeral processions where I'm out as the point man and the casket is coming in behind. That's where Joseph is, and he's followed by the national leadership of Egypt, 11 brothers and families and sons, and military chariots that could go into battle in war, accompanied by horsemen and soldiers.

This is quite the scene. I hope you can see it, and it's hard not to see something else here. It's hard not to imagine that this is a prefiguring of the exodus that will take place 400 years later, that will travel from the exact same point A to point B, that will travel led not by Joseph but by Moses from Egypt to Canaan, and will take much of the same route because they both will come in from the east across the Jordan river into the promised land, and so this is what the exodus will be like. I only wish after we finish Genesis 50, I could just keep going into Exodus and keeping that going. No one laughed. Okay.

*[Laughter]*

All right. Now, come to Verse 10. I want you to see, fifth, the lamentation for Jacob. Verse 10, "When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan ..." Now, what is a threshing floor? A threshing floor would be where farmers would harvest their wheat and take it to the highest hill of their property. On the highest hill, they would build a threshing floor, which would be made out of stone and it would be very flat, and the wind would blow the strongest on top of the highest hill, so you would never build a threshing floor in a valley; you would always build it on the top of a hill. The farmer would take his pitchfork and put it into the wheat and just throw it up in the air, and the wind would be blowing and make a separation. The heavy kernel would just come straight down, and they would be able to easily gather it and use it for consumption. The outer chaff that's of no use to anybody for anything, the wind just blows it away, it's just like a lightweight material, and it's what Psalm 1 talks about with the righteous are not \_\_\_\_\_, they're like the chaff that the wind blows away. It's the same picture there, with the threshing floor.

The point here is that they come to this threshing floor, which is elevated, and the people living in the land will be able to see what's going on up here. The Canaanites, who are living in the land, will be able to see them as they come to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, so they've crossed Jordan, and they lamented, which means to wail with loud crying, with – now watch these words that are just stacked up together – a very great and sorrowful lamentation. I'll spare us doing word studies on all four of those words, but it's like crying on steroids. I mean, it is intense wailing and deepest sorrow. Within this military procession and the funeral procession, there are different degrees, no doubt, of weeping with Joseph, with his 11 brothers, there's the depth of sorrow. With others, who had a more distant relationship from Joseph and Jacob, there would still be

sorrow, just not to the same extent. But, even today, it's a natural response when you see someone else crying, it brings emotion out of you. I mean, you can go to a movie, a sad movie, you're not even a part of the script, you're not even in the movie and you find yourself crying, and so we can understand how everyone here is drawn into the emotion of this moment. We read, "Joseph observes seven days' mourning for his father." Just bitter weeping, and all of this underscores and expresses how important his father was to him, and it underscores how important your father is intended by God to be to you, that if you would ever shed tears, it would be over the loss of a father or a mother.

Genesis 50:11, "When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning ..." well of course they saw it because they're up on the threshing floor in plain view of everyone. They said, "This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians," and so, therefore, it was named Abelmizraim," which means in English the mourning of Egypt. They were so moved by this sight that they renamed the place, the mourning of Egypt, in just great honor. You know what's interesting, the last time I went to Zambia in Africa, which is where David Livingstone, the missionary, made his way down into the heart of Africa to bring the Gospel there to the Africans. Every place where Livingstone set up camp and stayed, to this day the name of that place is the Anglo-Saxon name in honor of David Livingstone, that he had made the sacrifice to bring the Gospel to us and not leave us to die and perish eternally in Africa. All of the other towns, when you look at a map of Central Africa and Zambia, where Livingstone ended up being, they have regional names that come from the tribes in that area.

Wherever Livingstone went, he was so highly honored, and in fact, when he died, the Zambians cut his heart out and they buried it in Zambia because, "His heart belongs to us." They actually mummified his body, and they had to carry it on foot all the way to the coast, and their fear was that the cannibals would be able to smell the body of David Livingstone and they would eat Livingstone's body en route to the coast where they could put it on a ship. That's why they embalmed Livingstone's body, and they put it on a ship, and that ship sailed all the way around and came to England, where his body is now buried in Westminster Abbey but his heart remains in Africa. Well, these Canaanites see the mourning over Jacob, and what a great man he must be, and so, "We must rename this place. We will name it the mourning of Egypt," and so this leads us, finally, to Genesis 50:12, the observation of the sons, and this is worth noting. "Thus, his sons did for him, Jacob, as he had charged," and this is so interesting, that even after death, the sons are still submissive to their father.

Even after death, the sons are still obedient to their father, what he had requested before he died. They could have reasoned, "Well, dad will never know the difference, where his body is to be buried. Dad is in Heaven. It doesn't really matter." But, no, there was an allegiance to their own father that they will carry out his dying request, and it would have been a whole lot easier just to have buried him in Egypt, to not have to make this long journey all the way back up to Canaan and then the long journey all the way back. But, their father asked for it and so they honored their father and they respected their father, just like you need to honor and respect your father. Genesis 50:13, "For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before

---

Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite." Genesis 50:14, "After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt." I love that, because Joseph is a man of his word. Joseph said, "If you let me go, I'll come back." He let his yes be yes, and, having buried his father, he kept his word and came back to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. This is an incredible passage. It's a very practical passage for us.

Now, as I bring this to a conclusion, let me be very personal with you. When you die, and you will, unless Christ returns, when you die, what will be most important is not where your funeral will be. What is most important is not where your body will be buried. What is most important is not who will come to your funeral, how many people will come to your funeral. What will be most important at your funeral is where will you be, because you're going to be in one of two places. You're either going to be in Heaven or you're going to be in hell, and so the most important question about your funeral is where will you be? There is only one way to be in Heaven after you die, and that is to commit your life to the Lord, Jesus Christ, to repent of your sin, to deny yourself, to take up a cross, to become a follower of the Lord, Jesus Christ. What is most important in your life is that you are born again, and that you have experienced the miracle of regeneration, and that you have a new heart and a new mind and a new life, that the old things have passed way and, behold, new things have come. Do you know the one who said, "I am the resurrection and the life"? That is the most important question for you concerning your funeral, is where will you be when everyone else gathers to remember you? May it be well with your soul in that day, and it can be, if you would take that step of faith and entrust your life to the King of kings and to the Lord of lords, the one who has conquered death, and the one who alone gives eternal life. May that be your testimony this day. Let us pray.

Father in Heaven, how we rise up to praise your most blessed name. We praise you, that you are the God of Life, and the God who rules over death and over the grave, and that you have given to us eternal life, and we give you endless praise. May everyone in this house today find their rest in the Lord, Jesus Christ, and one day find their rest in Heaven above. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

I leave you with this benediction. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless, with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Glory, Majesty, Dominion, and Authority before all time and now and forever. Amen. God bless you. You're dismissed.

*[End of Audio]*