

**Genesis 46: 1-7; “Jacob Comes to Live in Egypt”, Sermon # 110 in the series –
“Beginnings”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 28th,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

Israel is taking his journey with all that he had. He is going to Egypt. He's going down to see Joseph his son, whom he thought that he had lost. His sons have told him that Joseph is alive and so he will go and see him before he dies. Actually it is more amazing than that. He is not only going down to see Joseph but he is also going down to live there in Egypt; he and all his household of seventy persons. Was this the right decision for him to make, to leave the Promised Land and go to another country and spend the rest of his days there? Well, it was, and so what I would like to bring to your attention is this important truth; that God knows how to lead you into all the blessings which He has prepared for you and your family. The question that we want to ask this morning is this. How did God do this? How did He lead Jacob to overcome his fears and convince him that it was His will for him to go down to Egypt and live there for the rest of his life? Well, God is going to convince Jacob that his going down to Egypt was the right thing to do. And so, let me give you 4 lessons concerning God's leading of Jacob to come live in Egypt. I pray that these principles that I will give to you from God's word today, will be of help to you in your following God's lead in your own life.

1st of all – God spoke to Jacob when He saw His devotion to Him. (verses 1-3)

“So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, ‘He I am.’ How is it that God leads His people? Well, He always leads them by His word, doesn't He? And we must also remember that in connection with His word, He always leads us by His Holy Spirit. Sometimes this is a very mysterious process for Christians in our day because we do not receive direct revelation from God. We do have God's word the Bible, and it is sufficient for every area of our faith and practice. It gives us all of the principles that you will need to make wise decisions. But, even though this is true, there are many particulars of His will for your life, such as where you will live, which you will need to have Him guide you into them, lest you make rash or unwise decisions.

I want you to see that Jacob was more interested in doing God's will than in following a chain of providential circumstances that came to him. Even if it meant disappointing Joseph, he would have still followed God's lead. Sometimes, if we are to follow God's lead, it may mean disappointing your relatives about where you will live. But in this situation that we are studying now, it would not be the case for Jacob. Jacob did, however, need very much to know, at this precise point in his life, what God thought about his going down to Egypt. Let us remember that God speaks to us, first and foremostly, in and through His Word, the Bible. He reveals his declarative will for our lives in the sacred text.

But let us also remember that God does providentially lead and guide his people. This does not mean that you must submit to everything that comes to you in your experience as being the good and right thing for you to do. You cannot ultimately be led by God's providential ordering of events, or by your feelings in the matter. You must indeed always obey the commands of God's word. But I am saying, and this text is saying, that you must learn to weigh God's providence in light of what He has declared in the Scriptures, and then make wise choices based upon what you know. This will most certainly mean that you will need to pray and to seek His face to know, and to truly understand, what God would have you

personally to do. Not every impression or feeling about where you should live will mean that it is God's will for you to leave the place where you now live, and go to another place and live your life there. Nor is every providential opportunity an indication of God's will.

Many people have romantic notions about these kinds of things. They think that their life would be so much better if they moved to another location. It is as if they think that God is not with them in every place that they go, or that He cannot bless them in any other place than the one that they dream of being in. The real question is – What does God want me to do at this particular time in my life? It could be that God, at some time in your life might want you to move and to actually go to a place which is totally unfamiliar and whose culture is quite different from yours. This was the case with Jacob here in our text. As Jacob was very old and feeble, and since he was full of fears about leaving the Promised Land and going down to Egypt to live, God promises him that He will go down with him. And He tells him that He will give to him many comforts and assurances of blessing, both to him, and to his whole family.

This leads me to declare to you that it is always a good thing for every believer to remember, that God does have plans for your life. And to find out what God's mind is in the matter, it is always good for you to bring the matter directly to God in prayer and with a worshipful spirit. Our text says in verse 1, that "Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac." This was how Jacob brought the matter to God's attention. He offered sacrifices when he came to Beersheba. By the way, I think that these verses are teaching us that is a good thing to take all that we have, and all that we are, and bring it to God in a prayer of dedication. You should come to God, showing Him your heart of submission to His will, before you make any major move in your life.

Jacob is a picture of this truth. Beersheba was on the way to Egypt. And I am sure that Jacob when he approached the place, he was reminded in many ways, of the life and devotion of his father, to God. This is how it ought to be. The scenes of childhood, the scenes and the places of our father if he was a godly person, are often deeply fixed in your mind, so much so, that you cannot escape their example. The times of prayer, when Jacob saw his father Isaac call upon God. The times that he had either heard about, or seen personally, when Isaac went out to meditate in the field; when he went to pray and to be alone with God. And the time he had often heard about, when Isaac's prayers were answered; when he lifted up his eyes and saw Rebekah, Jacob's mother, coming to him, riding on a camel.

He remembered also, his father telling him about the time when Lord had appeared to him and said to him – "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you." "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father." That was the time when the family was living in Gerrar. But then, when his father tried to dig wells for water, and there were quarrels that took place with the herdsmen of Gerrar over the wells of water, his father had moved from that place, and dug another well. He did not want to quarrel about it. And his father called that place, Rehoboth, because he said – "For the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

What a joy this was to Jacob, to see the Lord answer his father's prayers for direction. In Genesis 26: 23 it says – "Then Isaac went up from there to Beersheba." "And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you.' "I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." So it says that Isaac "built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord, and he

pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well". Verse 33 says – "So he called it Shebah." "Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day." It was the "well of the oath", the oath that Isaac swore to Abimelech when he made a covenant with him, that he would "only do him good". Jacob remembered all this. He remembered the way that the Lord had directed his father to the place that he would have him to live. He knew that God would direct him also, and go with him. This is what he will do for you dear Christian if you are submissive to His written word and sensitive the leading of His Spirit.

2nd – God tells him not to fear going to Egypt; that He would go with him.

(verses 3 and 4a)

"So He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.'" "I will go down with you to Egypt." So this is what came to Jacob's mind after God spoke to him – If this God, the God of my fathers, directed them, then why can't I trust that He will personally guide me in this matter? I should not fear if He has told me not to fear. This is why he had offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. He wanted God to speak peace to His heart. With all of his heart he desired to go to be with his son Joseph whom he had not seen for 23 years. But he still loved God and his word to him more than his desire to be with Joseph. To visit Joseph would have been perfectly permissible. But to take everything and everyone of his household and move to Egypt, he knew that he needed the approval and blessing of God Almighty, the One who had appeared to him before. He would not go down to live there if God did not want him to go.

But now He knew that God did want him to go, and this too would be a sacrifice; to leave the very place where his father had settled and lived; according to the Word of God to his father Isaac, so many years ago. This God was his father's God, he knew. And He knew that this would bring the desired response of God's counsel coming to him. The sacrifices which Jacob offered in verse 1, were sacrifices of the expectation that God would answer him. So too, when you bring your sacrifices of thanksgiving and you praise Him for all that He has done for you in the past; the way that He has provided for you, the way that He has led you, and especially in His revealing to you this great salvation from your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, then you can be confident that God will give you counsel as well. God answered him. God told him of the great plans that He had for him, to make of him a great nation in Egypt. He was not to be afraid.

How many people, among God's true people, are continually afraid and fearful because they do not keep up their devotion to God. But it says in Psalm 34: 4 – "I sought the Lord and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears." A Christian may even believe that God is sovereign, but because they do not seek God, they do not have their fears removed in a timely fashion. Jeremiah 29: 11 will help in this regard – "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you." "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." "I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity...." You will find when you seek the Lord, that the Lord has gone before you in the plans that He has for you; plans for your welfare and not for your calamity. And He will be with you to establish you where He wants you to live, and He will bless you greatly there, even if you are going down to Egypt. The truth of this, Jacob came to know by real experience.

I wonder if you have sufficiently considered the blessing of God which will come to you when you will remember and live by the precept and the promise of Hebrews 13: 5 – "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have." "For I will never

leave you nor forsake you.” What a wonderful blessing is the presence of God with each of His people in these New Covenant times. It assures us that God will counsel us in our spirit in accordance with a renewed mind. A true Christian will always have legitimate fears about what the influences of what the world will do to his relationship with God. He knows that the Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, and undefiled; separate from sinners. He knows that, “in the world you shall have tribulation”.

A Christian does not want to make shipwreck of their faith. But as they walk through this life, they should become more and more thankful for the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit who himself bears witness with your spirit that you are the child of God. That Spirit who gives you the confidence that you can go into the work world, the business world, the social world of our day, is not the spirit which says that you are strong in yourself and know what you can and cannot face. No, it is the firm belief that Christ is the One who goes with you into all the various situations of your life. If you know that what you are doing is something that he would approve of, and He is leading you into it, then you can have real confidence. See to it that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4: 30-32)

3rd – God told Jacob how great would be His help to him during this time in Egypt.

Verse 3b and 4 – “I will make of you a great nation there.” “I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again...” God knows how to build the believer’s faith and their life into something more than they could possibly conceive for themselves. What He is looking for from you is faith in His greatness and His goodness and His faithfulness to His promises and obedience to His commands. Even though this was a foreign country, even though this was a foreign culture and an ungodly one at that, still God would use this place to accomplish His purposes concerning Israel. This is the way that it is for Christians today as well, in the Egypt of this world that you live in. But even though we are in the world, we are no of the world. Let us see that God can do great things for us, and make us glad, right where we are. He can make our family great, He can use us to accomplish His purposes, even in a place where the cultural tide is going against the Christian.

We just need to see to it that we do not love the world or the things which are in the world. If we do, the love of the Father is not in us. I think that this means that we do not love the possessions of this world inordinately, and that we do not grasp the idea that God’s plans and what He gives and what He is doing with our lives is so very much greater than all that the world gives with all of allurements and pleasures which are passing. Moses, it says in Hebrews 11: 24, “when he became of age, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” That is what we are called to do as well in terms of forsaking this “Egyptian” world that we live in. We do it by faith. We do not seek to be popular with worldly people. We consciously choose to suffer affliction by identifying ourselves with Christ and His people; to even suffer being evil spoken of by family and friends for our identification with Christ and Biblical truth. I think that we are coming to a time in our country now, which will sift Christians in relation to this; whether they love the world more than Jesus and doing God’s will.

So, what do you do when you need direction, when you are afraid that perhaps you are making a mistake in your involvements with a world so heavy with sinful influences to your soul? Well turn to Isaiah 41, verse 8. Here the Lord, through the prophet, is addressing the descendants of Jacob and he says to them, “But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend.” “You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest region, and said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God.’” “I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” This is most certainly an Old Testament promise of the New Testament grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for His people.

Jacob is a father to the faith of all God’s Elect people; a pattern and a type of those who inherit these blessings. God does go with Jacob, down into Egypt, the picture of the world in the Scriptures. He will go with each one of us who is trusting in Him and His promises. He goes with you by His glorious presence, so that you will be guarded and guided in relation to all the important decisions that you will have to make in this world. He will help you, O believer. Verse 14 gives you the word of assurance concerning this – “Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!” “I will help you,’ says the Lord and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” “Behold I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff.” “You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter; you shall rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel.”

Is this not what Christ’s Church and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ learns to do? Is this not the way that He leads us? There are mountains of difficulties to holiness and a good witness of Christ to men of this world. You may have fears that are threatening to overwhelm your soul and spirit. A threshing sledge is given you to harvest the grain. It is a picture of the Holy Spirit being given to Christ’s Church so that, when the presence of the Lord is with you, so that when beset with fears and cares, when you use the Word of God rightly, that Christ gives you the power to make sense out of all of these things; to make grain out of it that you can eat. You can take it into your mind and heart and grow from it and live by it, and be made strong. You are beset with fears and cares but when you use the word of God rightly it is like a threshing sledge to your soul. You overcome the greatest enemies that you have. You will be able to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. You will overcome all of your greatest enemies, and everything that you have fears about.

Yes, Christ has a revelation for you about the Egypt of this world. He will go down with you into the Egypt of this world. And He would have you go with all your household. That is, He would have you face the temptations of the world by dwelling together with your brethren in the family of God. You will be in the world, but you will not be of the world. You will be a separate and distinct people from the world. You will live in Goshen and be cared for by shepherds. You will not then fall prey to the customs and practices of the world which you will find are sinful and idolatrous. If you would be the friend of the world your will make yourself the enemy of God, it says in James 4: 4. This is how God led Jacob and protected him. This is how He will lead you and protect you. Stay close to godly people in a local church and you shall not fall prey to the allurements of the world if they are walking in the Spirit, and you are walking in the Spirit.

4th - God promised Jacob that He will bring him back up again out of Egypt.

(verses 4b-7)

God knows all of our present weakness and the decline of our physical health as we get older. He knew that this trip down to Egypt was not going to be an easy one for Jacob. Jacob could have questioned God as to why he should go down there at his age. But you do not read a word of it. He had God's promises and he had seen the evidence of what Joseph had sent him in the wagons. He knew that he would be well provided for. In verse 5 it says – "Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him." This was a part of the Lord's being with Jacob; His going down with him. He was able to take carts loaded with the good things of Egypt. There are good things to be enjoyed in this life, and God is the One who best knows how to give them, and how they are to be used. Do you believe this as a Christian? One who is not a Christian does not know this.

If you do know this, then I urge you to live like you know it. Do not think that God does not know how to give you good things and good comforts, all in their right time. This is the mindset of the world, that God doesn't know how to give good things. You do not need to go head over heels in debt to be able to enjoy the good things that God provides. He will see to your welfare. He will provide for your legitimate needs and comforts at many critical points in your life, if you will trust Him and walk in His ways. Death was not too far off for Jacob. It would be a few more years and the time would come. This was a great concern to Jacob because he, I am sure, wanted to die in the Promised Land. He did not want to die in the land of idolatry, in the land of the refined heathen.

But God would bring him up again. That is, God would see to it, through Joseph, that he was not buried in Egypt, but in the land of promise. This was Jacob's faith in exercise. God gave Jacob this promise of his eternal inheritance, his eternal resting place, which was typified in the land of Canaan. This is where Jacob would be buried; in the land of promise, awaiting the Messiah, and awaiting the resurrection of the righteous dead at the end of the world. It was also the promise to Jacob that his seed, his descendants would not remain slaves in Egypt any longer than the time purposed by God. They would be brought up and out of the land of Egypt by God's Almighty power and His outstretched hand. This is what every true believer should have in mind when it comes their time to die; that they will be buried in the hope of the resurrection of the righteous, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Lord has gone down with us into the Egypt of this world in the person of His Son, the greater Joseph, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is with us while we journey through this world and he will someday close our eyes in death, but He will literally be waiting for us on the other side. I believe that I remember closing my own dear father's eyes when he died, but I believe that it was the blessing of the Lord that He permitted me to do so. I believe that it will be best if we can believe that it will be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who will Himself come to you at the time of your death and close your eyes on this world, but open our eyes in the next. May the Lord take away all fear in your death, beloved brethren. May you be able to say at that hour – Lord Jesus, put your hand on my eyes, and close them to this passing world, and open them to behold You and Your eternal glory.