



## The Father's Blessing

**Genesis 49:22-26 KJV** *Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: [23] The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: [24] But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) [25] Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: [26] The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*

**Genesis 49:22-26 Moffatt's** – *A tree of fruit is Joseph, a fruit tree by a well, the branches covering the walls. [23] Archers bitterly assail him, shoot at him savagely, [24] but his own bow remains steady, and he nimbly plies his arms; Jacob's Mighty One upholds him, [25] Israel's Strength sustains him, ay, your father's God, who aids you, God Almighty who will bless you with water from the heaven above and water from the flood below, blessings of breast and of womb, [26] blessings of fatherhood, sires and sons, dews from the ancient mountains, the boon of the everlasting hills. Such blessings rest on Joseph, the prince among his brothers!*

### I. INTRODUCTION – JACOB, THE DYING PATRIARCH

#### A. Jacob Looking Back Over His Life

-Joseph was a favorite son. You can be sure that into the inheritance that Jacob had sketched for him, that into it was crowded all of the father's love. Jacob would always have that place in his heart for that special son, Joseph.

-Because of his love and undying devotion for the long barren mother of Joseph, there was a foolishness, there was a weakness, there was a vulnerability in the heart of Jacob for Joseph that was not there for all of the other children.

-Here the aged patriot, in Genesis 49, is propped on his death bed and he is taking into his frail and feeble, wrinkled, aged hands the life of Joseph. He is one who has traveled the full range of human experience. There was not any depth of human sorrow and emotion that Jacob had not been privy to. Neither was there any human rapture that Jacob had not scaled the heights.

-He was shrewd and he was cunning. That is borne out in the previous chapters encapsulating his life in Genesis. He was a very clever businessman when it came to sheep, cattle, and profits. He doted on Joseph and his vulnerability had caused him to create a coat of many colors many years ago.

-The son whom he loves so much, now appears before him to be blessed in the final days of Jacob's life. Twelve sons are going to receive a blessing, but Joseph will receive the benefit of a special blessing from his father.

-At last, after Jacob has surveyed all of life's offerings and has looked at every gamut of human existence, every way that a man can be assured of having the mark of God on his life, every way that a man would be promoted above his fellows, one way that a man would rise superior over the mean and hating cruel brothers, Jacob shrewd mind, finally lays his hand on the life of Joseph.

#### B. The Father's Blessing

-Dying men who are about to leave this world as empty as they entered it, rarely, as a rule, place material wealth first in their scale of values. What mattered more to Jacob than his son's outward success was the spirit that was in him and the kind of man that he had become.

-He has reserved the greatest blessing to Joseph. The text that we read are the words verbatim that fell from the lips of

Jacob and was the blessing that he had treasured in his soul for years for the favorite son.

- What is it that you desire from life?
- What is it that you want out of a relationship with God?
- What are you in this for?
- What do you hope to attain out of it?
- What are you determined to gain from God and to gain from the Spirit?
- What spiritual knowledge are you going to wrest out of this Book?
- What mysteries of the Kingdom are you going to plunge your heart and mind into to fathom?
- What is it? What is it? What is it?
- What is it about the calling on your life?
- What is it about the tremendous responsibility that you have to God and to this life?
- What is it about this awesome burden that a man who walks with God hopes to attain?
- What do you want out of your walk with God?

### **1. Too Cheap !!!**

-Far too many hire in too cheap. Way too cheap! Jesus told the parable of the vineyard and how that in the morning he went out and hired laborers and all through the day there was work to be done. There was fruit to be harvested and so the Lord of the Vineyard was going back into the city time and again to hire men to work.

-Those who hired in at the first hint of the day came to understand that they had hired in too cheap because those at the very end of the day, hired in at the same wage and same price. It became the bargain of fools.

-There are so many that live among the Spirit of God and in the precincts of the Holy and walk among greatness. Daily they communicate with the King of kings and Lord of lords who want such cheap, gaudy, and shallow things of the Kingdom and of their walk with God.

-They want nothing out of prayer but a mere touch, a simple, scintillating thrill from God, who only want to know enough out of God's Word to be able just get by. They do not want enough knowledge to walk majestically and with mastery in the cause and the Kingdom. Again, I ask you, "What is it that you want from God?"

-Could I offer to you that some may be hiring in way too cheap for what God has and what He wants to offer to you?

-Those who are parents, now (I hope) have began to turn your attention from yourself and now are becoming focused on what heritage that you want to leave to your children. There has to be a spiritual heritage left for my children. That is the most important thing that I can leave to them.

-If the Lord was to give you a choice and grant to you the wisdom of Solomon and you could have laid out before you everything that God has to offer for you in the Kingdom, what would be your choice? What would be your selection?

-Jacob is lying there on his deathbed, reflecting on his youth. Life has washed out of him all of his sordid dreams and ambitions. The rough-shod rebel that had elbowed his way through every crowd and who had run roughshod over everyone has long ceased to live in this frail body of the aged patriot. All that he has learned has come too late for him to benefit, everything that he has come to understand about the Kingdom, has come too late.

-He was so hard and so coarse in the early years. He was such crude material. He was such a poor student. He failed so many classes over and over again.

-But now that he has the opportunity to take the wisdom of a life and pass it on. I pray that you do not go so long down the road that you learn too late for it to benefit yourself and the Kingdom of God.

-I pray that you do not get down the road in your life and never grasp any spiritual maturity that comes from consistency and hunger for God. I pray that you do not go so far in your life that littered along the path of the past that there are treasures that were never mined out of the bedrock of commitment.

-I pray that you do not travel so far in your spiritual walk that in looking over your shoulder you find neglected jewels, crown jewels, that would have set you apart from the common and the ordinary.

-I pray that the blessings that you pass on to those who follow are those that you have experienced and are not those that you have heard of but never be able to taste, to hold, and to embody.

-Now this old patriarch cries out in a warning to his favorite son. He is going to give him a blessing that is going to set him apart from the rest of his brothers. This parent takes the biography of his own life, written in his own hand, and begs him to learn from this authentic and first-hand account of tragedy, failure, of unyielding clay, of a stubborn will, and of impure motive.

## 2. Jacob's Request for Joseph

-Jacob does not ask for Joseph to be given a sheltered and protected soft place. He does not ask for Joseph to be given a place of comfort and security. He does not hope for it, he does not even ask for it because he does not want this for his favorite son.

-He knows that in the quiet, land-locked waters that the scum, and the green algae prevail and the water will become bitter, vile, and become infested with parasites. He knows that the open seas is where the secrets lie, where the spray is biting and the waves are tumultuous and angry. Jacob knows that here the ship will stutter and stagger under the awesome power of the sea but he also knows that it is here that sailors are born.

*Theodore Roosevelt – It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly. . . . who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory nor defeat.*

-So Jacob asks of God and he is laying his hand on the brow of Joseph and asking that He would allow the archers, the most cunning, those whose skill is at the bull's-eye, he who never misses his prey and never misses his target, he is asking for Joseph to have to face the most skilled, the most brutal, blood-thirsty enemies that a man can face and that is the blessing of Jacob prays for Joseph.

-There is something about an archer that makes them more bloodthirsty and cruel than other warriors. His attack is more cowardly than that of the swordsman. The swordsman plants himself near you and the battle is played out foot to foot. There is some defense allowed in the oncoming blows.

-But the archer stands at a distance, hides himself in an ambush and without your knowing it lets loose an arrow that he wants to sink into your heart. That is the kind of enemies that Jacob was praying for Joseph to have to deal with.

- One that will not come toe to toe.
- One that will not show their faces.
- One that loves the hidden regions of darkness and hates the light.
- One that will shoot from a distance.
- One that forges his arrowheads and aim them toward our hearts.

-And that old man prayed. . . . .

- God do not give him immunity from the buffeting of life.
- Allow him no tame escape but let him be exercised with difficulties.
- Never let him be shielded from the dangers and the wounds of the high places in the field.
  
- Let him have his whole fair share of trouble to face and pain to bear.
- Grant him a brave heart that can face life at it's darkest unafraid, and such an sense of God, that continually beside him, too near to be missed, and to certain to be doubted.

### **C. The Problem with Preservation**

-I have a word for those who want to preserve themselves in this life:

- You cannot escape, as a matter of fact you will not escape.
- You cannot protect yourself from hurt.
- You cannot protect yourself from vulnerability.
- You cannot protect yourself and hoard yourself from being spent.
- If you are going to taste of some of the dreams that you have.
- If you are going to know some of the secret moments with God that you quest for and that you hunger for, you must be prepared to face some of Hell's bitterest enemies.
- If you grasp the Father's blessing then you will know some of the loneliest vigils and roads.
- If you are to benefit from the Father's blessing then you are going to be wounded, you are going to bleed, and you are going to suffer because you cannot preserve and perpetuate yourself at the same time.

-It is these things that will grow the soul and fill it with grit, determination, and sturdiness. Otherwise without these things the soul can grow soft and flabby and degenerate.

-Every man of God whom God has placed His hand on, goes on to find battles where he will be bloodied and battered and disappointed and disillusioned and shattered and broken and hurt and wail in pain and agony and misunderstanding.

-Every man who does anything for God will have to endure such. Sometimes it is a lonely road that we must walk. What we must understand is that Jacob's blessing is really God's blessing. You will see that every man who lives under the blessing (and the foolish might call it a curse) but it was a Father's blessing for the favorite son.

-Joseph, David, Daniel, even Jesus Christ suffered, bled, hurt, sorrowed. . . . .

-No man can keep himself and protect himself if he is going to be used by God. You make a great mistake when you try to pamper and coddle your life and guard it against pain and grief. The only real way to perpetuate the Kingdom is

by giving yourself away.

-Jacob asked this for Joseph: Not that he would be pampered, coddled, and preserved but that he would be thrust into the stiffest stream that life's current had and that he would have to climb the steepest hills that life had to offer.

## II. PRAYING FOR THE DIFFICULT PATH

-Joseph would have to endure the most vicious of enemies for his own greatness. Why? Why? Why?

- Would you ever think of praying for such?
- Have you thought of asking God to give you the twisting trails and paths in the uncharted and unmapped wilderness?
- Would you ever think of asking God for your fair share of pain, heartache, and trouble?

"I don't want to get off," cries the poet Browning (he was thinking of death), I don't want to have my eyes bandaged, and creep past; I don't want to be spared anything. Give me the whole of a man's lot, however sore that it may be.

"I don't want to get off," cries the Apostle Paul (he was thinking of life, which he felt to be a far more dangerous affair), let them all come—principalities and powers, the present hardships, the unknown that is lurking in the future waiting to stab as we walk past—let them all come and in Christ we will face them, and be better for them.

"I don't want to get off," cried a man watching a field being plowed (he was thinking of his soul). The red earth being torn apart by the cruel, gleaming plowshare. But if the Lord is guiding the plow then let my soul be plowed deeper still.

-It is through the plowing, that the bareness of the soul is exposed and in time it will be covered by the rich gold of the harvest of righteousness which the Lord dares to promise. Let the archers shoot and let us struggle with their deadly darts.

-It is only these that can endow the soul with courage and infuse him with life. It is only these kinds of things that can load a man's soul with integrity, character, and consistency and ultimately with greatness.

-There are people who try to save themselves from these sorts of things but in doing so, dreams and visions will remain unrealized in the end. You cannot walk with God as a profitable servant if you are preserved from the Father's Blessing. Your life will not amount to the proverbial hill of beans if you are constantly preserved from the attack of the archers.

-"This is my life and I will spend it how I want to." That is a grave error and that statement reeks with worldliness. "It is not your life," Jacob says, "It is God's and it is given to you, not for yourself at all, but that you may be helpful in bringing revival and evangelism to the lost."

### A. The Vine on the Wall

-Jacob paints an incredible metaphor with the winding vine that drags the ground with its fruit. Each branch is weighed down with clusters of ripe fruit, even so much so that it runs far out over the road. Any passing traveler can reach up and grasp the treasures of the vine. He will go on his way refreshed and hopeful. That is what we are here for. . . . . to help others along the way.

-But to be fruitful, there will always have to be some pruning and adjustments made to the vine.

***John 15:2 KJV*** Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

***Luke 13:6-9 KJV*** He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. [7] Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why encumbereth it the ground? [8] And he answering

*said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: [9] And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

**John 15:16 KJV** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

-Embrace the challenges, the sorrows, the rudeness, and crudeness of life as these are the things that shape and create the depth of a man's life. There ought to be something within us that hungers for the pruning that can only come from the Word of God.

- Some things have to be dug out in prayer.
- Some things will only yield themselves to fasting.
- Some of the greatest heights come only through intense study.
- Some of the mountain tops in the Kingdom can only be scaled through the disciplines of the Spirit and of the will.

-Never despise the skilled archers. . . . It is through the battles with these enemies that the man of God is made. They pruning the unnecessary and frivolous out of life.

- No one can give you a relationship with God.
- No one can sack it up for you.
- This church cannot make you.
- The programs at this church cannot make you.
- An Accent Weekend cannot make you.
- No conference can make you the man that God desires you to be.

-It is the things that you talk about with God when just you and Him are alone. It is the conversations and it is the kind of hungers that you express to God and that move in your soul that will over the course of time manifest themselves in your actions and your life.

-Have you ever thought of asking God for:

- The taunts of a Goliath.
- The fear of lion's den.
- The fiery furnaces.
- The lonely Gethesemanes.
- Storms that you cannot row against.
- For a Judas' kiss.

- To be misunderstood as Joseph was by his brothers and by Potiphar.

-These types of prayers and desires, I am sure are rarely, if ever prayed, until the Word of God opens up avenues of new heights to us.

- It is to the man who is willing to take the challenges.
- It is the man who is willing to hurt and to bleed.
- It is the man who is willing to know sorrow.
- It is the man who is willing to walk alone.
- It is the man who is willing to be hated for a dream that burns within his soul.
- It is the man who is willing to assimilate the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ and take his ideals and concepts and accommodate them into his life that God deems as greatness.

-If we are honest with ourselves, we would like to wake up someday and have the things that we see in other great men. It would be our desire to possess the height, the depth, and the breadth of greatness that is in the men whose biographies only come to life in Scripture. We would like to by ease for God just to give them to us because of something we did or said, found favor in the sight of God. But it only comes to him who is willing to believe for it, to hunger for it, to bleed for it, and to hunger for it.

-Job was no frenzied, raving mortal of fate. He learned that there is something to say for God and for His ways. I would tell you now that I have no qualms with what God has brought into my life, even where His hand has hurt me the most, because there are gifts, talents, and an anointing that has come from that.

-It is through all of these things that God builds His church. Because God uses men who:

- Can climb mountains with age as did Caleb.
- Have no abating of their vision with the passing of years.
- Can challenge giants.
- Can pray in the lonely Gethsemane and shake worlds.
- Can carry Calvary's Cross.

-If those are the men whom God is seeking for, then there must be the Father's Blessing. What Jacob is praying for must happen to all of us. Our world must be marked by men who are not afraid to be misunderstood. The only way that those things happen is for men to have such a walk with God that His integrity pours out with their words and their life.

-I am entirely unprepared to defend sin in my life or in your life. You have to come to grips with what it means to have your own walk with God. Elijah feared God so much that he feared men very little. That courage and boldness needs to pour through this generation as never before. Walk with God, no matter where the path takes us.

- Where is the soul that is willing to pit himself against the challenges and the spirits of the cunning archers that assail every dreamer and every visionary?
- Where is the man that wants to earn it?
- Where is the heart that wants to have it?

-Not even the pure Joseph would have chosen it for himself. But you must understand who is praying the blessing, it is the heel-grabber, it is the rough-shod elbowing rebel praying for his son that he loves the most. His prayer: That Joseph will have to fight every step of the way and scratch and claw and dig and drive until he assails the archers.

-How many would want such a thing to come in the will?

-When a patriarch laid a hand on the son in those days that the blessing was prophetic. What he spoke came to live in the life of the man who was prayed for. It was not just a death wish but it was a life vision. It was a sovereign promise that would come from God.

- Can you have character and courage without danger?
- Can you really be deep if you have not sank a well deep down in your own life?
- Can you really have a walk with God if you have not blown out the hard, stubborn places of your life?
- Can you really have sympathy without suffering?
- Can you really understand if you have not been wounded in the same place?

-Joseph had to endure the poisonous envy of his brothers. (You owe it to yourself to be careful how you treat what the Father blesses, even if it is a brother.)

-Joseph had to endure the wicked vixen, Potiphar's wife. He was continually in her presence and yet his greatest question fixed the principles in his life, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Your sin is not against yourself or the other party, but the sin is against God.)

-Joseph had to endure the slander of Potiphar and was cast into prison. His character was ruined in the eyes of men and the archers sorely grieved him. But he went through all of this very quietly and without a lot of objection.

-Scripture states that his bow "abideth." It is quiet, it takes little notice of the attacks. He rested while they raged.

- Does the moon stop to lecture every dog that howls at her?
- Does the lion turn aside to rend every hyena that barks at him?
- Does the sun stop in its course because the clouds obscure it's light?
- Does the river stop because a willow hangs down into the water?

-Not on your life. God's universe moves on. Even if men oppose it, they move on continuously. That is the pattern for our own lives.

### **III. CONCLUSION – I CAN FACE THE ARCHERS**



William Wallace was the warrior poet who came as the liberator of Scotland in the early 1300's. When Wallace arrives on the scene, Scotland has been under the iron fist of English monarchs. The latest king is the worst of them all—Edward the Longshanks. A ruthless oppressor, Longshanks has devastated Scotland, killing her sons and raping her daughters. The Scottish nobles, supposed protectors of their flock, have instead piled heavy burdens on the backs of the people while they line their own purses by cutting deals with Longshanks.

Wallace is the first to defy the English oppressors. Outraged, Longshanks sends his armies to the field of Sterling to crush the rebellion. The highlanders come down, in groups of hundreds and thousands. It's time for a showdown. But the nobles, cowards all, don't want a fight. They want a treaty with England that will buy them more lands and power.

Without a leader to follow, the Scots begin to lose heart. One by one, then in larger numbers, they start to flee. At that moment, Wallace rides in with his band of warriors, blue warpaint on their faces, ready for battle. Ignoring the nobles—who have gone to parley with the English captains to get another deal—Wallace goes straight for the hearts of the fearful Scots. “Sons of Scotland. . . you have come to fight as free men, and free men you are.” He gives them an identity and a reason to fight. He reminds them that a life lived in fear is no life at all, that every last one of them will die some day.

“And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom.” He tells them that they have what it takes. At the end of the speech the men are cheering. They are ready. Then Wallace's friend asks, “Fine speech. Now what do we do?”

“Just be yourselves.”

“Where are you going?”

“I'm going to pick a fight.”

Finally someone is going to stand up to the English tyrants. While the nobles jockey for position, Wallace rides out and interrupts the negotiations. He picks a fight with the English overlords and the Battle of Sterling ensues—a battle that begins the liberation of Scotland.

-That ought to summon from everyone of us something.

What will we do with the rough seas?

What will we do with the terrible archers?

What will we do with the naysayers?

What will we do with the Father's Blessing?

-We Shall Start a Fight That Leads Toward a Revival. . . . .