



# THE BLESSING IN A BOX OF BONES

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# The Blessing in a Box of Bones

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Hebrews 11:22; Genesis 50:22-26

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As he reached the end of his life, Joseph gave instructions to his loved ones about what to do with the bones he left behind.

Hebrews 11:22 says, “By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”

Joseph had faith that God would deliver the Israelites out of Egypt, so much faith that he asked that the Israelites take his bones with them. When we understand the blessing in his box of bones, we will learn how to live confidently and die without fear.

## **First, faith remembers the unbreakable promises of God.**

In Genesis 50:24, Joseph tells his loved ones, “I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Adrian Rogers says, “Faith is getting a promise from the Word of God.”

Though Joseph was placed in a coffin in Egypt, he believed his bones would see this promised land, because his faith was rooted in God’s promises.

## **Second, faith relies on the unshakeable power of God.**

At this point, the Israelites did not have reason to leave Egypt. There was a famine in Canaan, and they had made themselves comfortable in Egypt. Joseph’s faith was contrary to evidence; it was not shaken by fickle emotions or circumstances. Joseph knew time must pass and that what would be left of him would be bones. But centuries cannot erode away the promises of God.

## **Finally, faith results in the unmistakable peace of God.**

Joseph reached the end of his life in perfect peace. The Book of Joshua tells us that Joseph’s bones did, in fact, make it to the promised land. Rather than building a monument of pride in Egypt, he chose his humble box of bones to be a monument of faith in Canaan. Joseph’s faith reminds us that our citizenship is in Heaven. We no longer have to fear death; we can make it our friend, if only we keep our eyes on Jesus all our days.

### **Life Application**

Does your faith remember the promises of God? Do you rely on His power and rest in His peace? Do not let your circumstances, emotions, or seeming delays erode your faith. Keep your eyes on Jesus.



# The Blessing in a Box of Bones

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Joseph was a champion of faith.
  - i) He lived as a great man.
  - ii) He died as a great man.
- b) The delineation of Joseph's life of faith is found in the book of Hebrews.
  - i) Hebrews 11:22
    - (1) Joseph was dying.
    - (2) He was the Prime Minister of Egypt with incredible wealth and power.
    - (3) He gave instructions concerning his bones.
- c) Man is the only creature who knows that he is going to die.
  - i) And he is trying desperately to forget it.
- d) There is a fear of death.
  - i) The Bible teaches that the devil keeps people in bondage through the fear of death.
    - (1) Hebrews 2:14-15
  - ii) Anyone who is afraid of death is in bondage.
  - iii) If we are afraid of death, then we have failed to understand what Jesus Christ has done for us.
- e) No one is ready to live until he is no longer afraid to die.
- f) Jesus came to deliver us from the fear and bondage of death.
  - i) As Christians, we can look forward to going to Heaven.
- g) The message today is about one incident in the life of Joseph, a champion of faith.
  - i) Hebrews 11:22
  - ii) Joseph gave a commandment to the children of Israel concerning his bones.
    - (1) God was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.
    - (2) The bones of Joseph would be placed in a box to be taken with them.
      - (a) There is a great blessing in this box of bones.
        - (i) It will teach us how to live confidently.
        - (ii) It will teach us how to die expectantly and to no longer fear death.

## 2) FAITH REMEMBERS THE UNBREAKABLE PROMISES OF GOD (GENESIS 50:22-26)

- a) Hebrews 11:22
  - i) Joseph had said that God was going to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.
- b) Genesis 50:22-26
  - i) The key to this passage is verse 24.
  - ii) The Israelites were in Egypt by the protective hand of God, but God was going to bring them out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan.
    - (1) Joseph knew this and was confident of this because God had made a promise.



- c) Genesis 15:13-14
  - i) It is approximately 300 years prior to the time of Joseph when God is speaking to Abraham in this passage.
  - ii) This Scripture is a clear promise of God.
    - (1) Abraham was going to have descendants.
    - (2) Those descendants were going to go into a strange land and would stay there for 400 years.
    - (3) They would be afflicted.
    - (4) But after 400 years, God would bring them out, and they would have great wealth.
      - (a) This is why, after 300 years, Joseph was able to say to his brothers that they were going to leave that place and to take his bones with them when they go.
- d) The root of Joseph's faith was the promise he had from Almighty God.
  - i) Joseph had saturated his heart, mind, soul and will in the Word of God.
- e) Romans 10:17
  - i) Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.
- f) What is faith?
  - i) Faith is not positive thinking.
  - ii) Faith is not following a hunch.
  - iii) Faith is not hoping for the best.
  - iv) Faith is not a feeling of optimism.
  - v) Faith is not self-confidence.
  - vi) Faith is not wishing on a star.
  - vii) Faith is not crossing your fingers.
  - viii) Faith is getting a promise from the Word of God.
- g) Hebrews 11:1
  - i) The word "hope" here does not mean a fond desire; it means a glorious assurance based on the Word of God.
- h) The word "hope" in the Bible does not mean the same thing as when we use the word "hope" today.
  - i) When a young girl wants to get married, she puts some nice things in a chest and calls it a "hope" chest.
    - (1) She hopes one day that she will get married.
    - (2) This is not what the word "hope" means in the Bible.
  - ii) The Second Coming of Jesus is called "the blessed hope."
    - (1) Titus 2:13
    - (2) We know that Jesus is coming again because we have God's promise.
      - (a) John 14:3
  - iii) The Bible calls hope the "anchor of the soul."
    - (1) Hebrews 6:19
- i) Our faith will not exceed our love, knowledge nor our understanding of the Word of God.
- j) Faith is the by-product of hearing from God.



- i) We cannot have faith by merely guessing at the will of God.
- ii) We cannot have faith by just following a hunch.
- iii) We said, "God said it," and believe.
- k) Joseph told the Israelites that they were surely coming out of Egypt because his faith was resting in the unbreakable promises of God.

### 3) FAITH RELIES ON THE UNSHAKEABLE POWER OF GOD (GENESIS 50:24)

- a) We can have faith because God says that He can do it and will do it, and we know that God is able to do it.
- b) Genesis 50:24
  - i) Joseph believed in the unshakeable power of God.
- c) Contrary to human evidence, Joseph had faith.
  - i) At the time Joseph stated that they were going to leave Egypt, there was no reason for the Israelites to leave.
    - (1) They had already left Canaan because of a famine.
    - (2) They were in a place of favor.
    - (3) They were in comfortable circumstances.
  - ii) Outwardly, there was no reason why they should leave.
    - (1) If the Israelites had been like many modern-day Christians, they might have re-examined the promises in the light of present-day circumstances.
      - (a) There are those today who take the promises of God and parade them past the judgment bar of human reason.
      - (2) But the unshakeable power of God overcomes circumstances.
- d) Joseph's faith was not shaken by fickle emotions.
  - i) Joseph's emotions did not have anything to do with God's promise.
  - ii) Feelings come and go and are deceptive.
  - iii) Do not base your faith on how you feel about the situation.
- e) Romans 1:17
- f) We need to get out of the realm of emotion and get our faith in the unbreakable promises of God and in the unshakeable power of God.
- g) John 5:24
- h) If you have never met the devil, it is because you and the devil have been going in the same direction.
  - i) If you turn around, you will have a head-on collision.
- i) When the devil gets on your case, get the Word of God.
  - i) Instead of you arguing with the devil, make him argue with God.
    - (1) Make him argue with the unbreakable promises of God.
- j) Joseph's faith was not stampeded by circumstances, challenged by his emotions nor eroded by long delay.
  - i) Three hundred years had passed since God had made that promise, and more time was yet to come.



- ii) Joseph said, "Take my bones with you."
  - (1) He did not say, "Take my body with you."
  - (2) Joseph knew that his body would be turned to dust and that the only thing left would be a box of bones.
- iii) Joseph knew that time must pass.
  - (1) Exodus 1:8
  - (2) Yet, Joseph was standing on the Word of God.
  - (3) Don't let seeming delay keep you from believing the Word of God.
  - (4) Centuries cannot erode away the promises of God.
- k) Habakkuk 2:3
  - i) God has an appointed time.
- l) Another illustration of how God fulfills His promises through time is found in the book of Ezekiel.
  - i) Tyre was an ancient, wicked city on the seacoast of the Mediterranean.
  - ii) The lifestyles of the people of Tyre were an affront to the ways of God.
  - iii) God prophesied, through the prophet Ezekiel, that He would destroy Tyre.
    - (1) Ezekiel 26:3
    - (2) Ezekiel 26:12-14
      - (a) When God gave this promise, Tyre was one of the mightiest city-states on Earth.
  - iv) The years passed, and in 550 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian, came and made siege of ancient Tyre and decimated it.
    - (1) Knowing that Nebuchadnezzar was coming, the people of Tyre slipped out of the city-state and made their way to an island where they felt safe.
    - (2) Though Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city, he left the walls, houses and timber.
      - (a) But God had said that the stones, the walls, the timbers, and even the dust would be cast into the sea.
  - v) In 215 B.C., over three hundred years later, Alexander the Great came through the land, marching in conquest.
    - (1) He asked the people of Tyre to help him, because they had a great navy now that they were an island city-state.
  - vi) His armies took the walls, the timbers and those ruins and built a causeway out to the island inhabited by the people of Tyre.
    - (1) Not a stone and not a timber were left of the former place.
    - (2) It was all thrown into the sea to build the causeway so that Alexander the Great could march his armies against Tyre.
  - vii) The promises of God are not eroded away by time, emotion or circumstances.
- m) When God says something, He is going to do it.
- n) Some may wonder if Jesus is coming again.
  - i) Some may say that it has been a long time.
    - (1) The Bible prophesies that there would be people like this.



- (a) 2 Peter 3:4
- (2) 2 Peter 3:8
  - (a) God is not concerned with time.
  - ii) God will do what He says He will do.
- o) Joseph said, "God will surely bring you out."
  - i) Joseph had the promise.
  - ii) Joseph knew the power.

**4) FAITH RESULTS IN THE UNMISTAKEABLE PEACE OF GOD (GENESIS 50:24)**

- a) Genesis 50:24
- b) Joseph was a man dying in peace.
  - i) Joseph's grandchildren and great grandchildren were brought to him, and they sat upon his knees.
  - ii) There was not a hint of panic.
  - iii) He was stepping into Glory in perfect peace.
- c) Joseph said, "Take my bones with you."
  - i) Exodus 13:18-19
  - ii) Joshua 24:32
  - iii) Just as Joseph had believed and prophesied, Moses carried his bones across the sands of the Sinai.
  - iv) Then, Joshua carried Joseph's bones across Jordan and into Canaan.
- d) Why all this fuss about Joseph's bones? What difference did it make to Joseph?
  - i) Joseph could have built himself a monument in Egypt.
  - ii) Joseph could have had himself embalmed and enshrined with great glory, pomp and circumstance.
    - (1) He had the power to do it.
    - (2) He had the wealth to do it.
  - iii) But Joseph wanted to be a part of what God was doing.
    - (1) He knew that success, wealth, power and everything else this world has to offer is temporary.
    - (2) That is why God could trust him with such wealth and power.
  - iv) Joseph did not want a monument to pride but a monument of faith.
    - (1) He believed God.
    - (2) He was identifying with what God was doing.
- e) Joseph knew that when he died and they put his bones in a coffin that God was not finished with those bones.
  - i) Daniel 12:2
  - ii) John 5:28-29
- f) Everyone is going to be raised from the dead.
  - i) Don't get the idea that only Christians are going to be raised from the dead.
    - (1) Both the saved and the lost are going to be raised.
- g) There is coming a resurrection.





- i) The prophet Daniel said that it would happen.
- ii) The Lord Jesus said that it would happen.
- iii) You will one day rise from the dead, either to be swept into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ or to meet in the judgment a God you do not know.
  - (1) Are you ready for that resurrection?
- h) We, too, are going to have an exodus.
  - i) Philippians 3:20-21
    - (1) For Christians, our vile bodies will be transformed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus.
    - (2) We are looking for Jesus; our citizenship is in Heaven.
  - ii) 1 Corinthians 15:54-58
    - (1) "Corruptible" in this passage means "that which decays."
    - (2) "Mortal" in this passage means "that which dies."
- i) We don't know how much Joseph knew about the resurrection; but we know that he, by faith, gave commandment concerning his bones.

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Death is a fact.
  - i) We do not know how or when we will die, but, "It is appointed unto man once to die."
    - (1) Hebrews 9:27
- b) Through His resurrection, the Lord Jesus pulled the sting out of death.
  - i) Because He lives, we live with Him.
  - ii) We no longer fear death because we have a loving Savior.
- c) Don't you want to receive the Lord Jesus into your life today?
  - i) John 1:12
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16



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Take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews chapter 11, and in a moment we're going to read verse 22. This is a story of another champion of faith whose name is Joseph. Now, beyond the shadow of any doubt or peradventure, Joseph was a great man. He lived as a great man, but he also died as a great man. Here's the delineation of his life of faith. It's found here in Hebrews 11 verse 22, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel," now watch this, "and gave commandment concerning his bones." That's it! I mean, of all of the life that Joseph lived so much in the Old Testament, and then just this one verse, and a very short, pithy verse. Joseph is dying. He's the Prime Minister of Egypt. He has incredible wealth and power. And he says, "We're leaving here, and I want to tell you what to do with my bones." The title of the message today, "The Blessing in a Box of Bones." We're going to be talking about bones today.

You know, man is the only creature who knows he's going to die, and he's trying desperately to forget it. If you don't believe that, look at the woman with too much makeup, the man who has already passed middle age, making a fool of himself in a sports car and trying to dress like a teenager with a gold chain around his neck. We just don't like to think about death! If you mention death, people will look at you like you have smallpox. In society today, we don't talk much about death. You go to a funeral, and in the funeral we do all we can do to camouflage the fact of death. Our cemeteries look like memorial parks. And we just change the subject of death like we switch channels in a television set. Why is that? Well, there is a fear of death, and the Bible teaches that the devil keeps people in bondage through the fear of death. Hebrews 2 verses 14 and 15. It talks of Jesus dying, and it says, "That through death He might," Jesus might, "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime in bondage."

Anybody who's afraid of death is in bondage. Are you afraid of death? Then Satan has done a job on you, and you have failed to understand what Jesus Christ has done for you. And I want to say clearly and plainly, no one is ready to live until he's no longer afraid to die. Jesus has come to deliver us from the fear and, correspondingly, the bondage of death.

We ought to be really delighted to die. I heard of a woman in her late 90's who lived many, many years, and it was obvious she was dying. Her children and grandchildren came to stand around her bed and they were weeping. She said, "Look, don't worry about me. I am tickled to death to die." "I am tickled to death to die!" She is looking forward to going to Heaven.

Now our story today is about Joseph. Only one incident in his life, this champion of faith who did so very much. Now look at the verse again, Hebrews 11 verse 22, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

What was the commandment concerning his bones? He said, "Look, you're going to leave Egypt. We're down here in Egypt. We have it good. We have it made in Egypt right now. But we're going to leave Egypt, and I'll be dead. But God's going to bring you out. You're going. And when you go, take me



with you. Put my bones in a box and take them with you. I wouldn't be caught dead here." And so, he's wanting to go. He's going with them. He's saying, "Don't you leave me behind."

Now there's a great blessing in this box of bones that we're going to study about today because it will teach you, number one, how to live confidently; and number two, how to die expectantly and to no longer fear death.

Three thoughts I lay on your heart and on your mind that come out of this simple verse. And we're going to go back, if you will, to the story that is referred to here in the New Testament, go back to the first book of the Bible, Genesis, and go back to chapter 50, if you will. And in Genesis chapter 50 you'll find what the writer of Hebrews was talking about.

Now here's the first proposition that faith does to help you to live confidently and to die expectantly. **Faith remembers the unbreakable promises of God.** Faith remembers the unbreakable promises of God. Now Joseph had said in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 22 that, "God is going to bring you out." And now look if you will in Genesis chapter 50 verses 22 through 26, "And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's house. And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation," that is, he saw his great grandchildren. There they are upon his knees, "and the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, 'I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence,'" that is, from this place. "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." Now the key to all of this is in verse 24. And in verse 24, "Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swear to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob."

Now, here's the point. They were down there in Egypt. They were down there by the protecting hand of God, but God was going to bring them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. Now how did Joseph know this? How did Joseph know that they were coming out? Why was Joseph so sure that the Jews would not stay in Egypt? Because God had made a promise.

I'll read a promise to you, you put it down in your margin. In Genesis 15 verses 13 and 14, God is speaking to Abraham about 300 years prior to this and He's making a promise to Abraham. "And He said unto Abram." That was his name at that time; not Abraham, but Abram. He said to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed," that is, your children, Abraham, "shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs," that's Egypt, "and shall serve them and they shall afflict them 400 years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge. And afterward shall they come out with great substance." Now there's a clear promise. God said, "Abraham, you're going to have some descendants. Your descendants are going to go into a strange land. They're going to stay there for 400 years. They're going to be afflicted. But after 400 years, I'm going to bring them out, and they're going to have great wealth." Now that is a clear promise in the Word of God. Is it any wonder then, that after 300 years Joseph could say to his brothers, "Look, I'm going to die. After I die, you are coming out of here, and take me with you! Don't leave my bones here."



Now get the point. We're talking about Joseph's faith. What was the root of his faith? He had a promise from Almighty God. It is so evident that Joseph had saturated and marinated his heart, his mind, his soul, his will in the Word of God.

Now there's one phrase that will come through these studies over and over again, and that is Romans 10 verse 17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Ladies and gentlemen, do you want faith? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. What is faith? It's not positive thinking. It's not following a hunch. It's not hoping for the best. It's not a feeling of optimism. It's not self-confidence. It's not wishing upon a star and crossing your fingers. Faith is getting a promise from the Word of God.

Remember we're in Hebrews chapter 11. Now, you're in Genesis chapter 50, but in Hebrews chapter 11, this great chapter on faith, it begins in verse 1, Hebrews 11 verse 1 that says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for." That word "hope," I've told you, does not mean a fond desire. It means a glorious assurance based on the Word of God. The word "hope" in the Bible does not mean what we use when we use the word hope. A girl wants to get married. She puts some nice things in a chest and calls it a "hope chest." She just hopes one day she'll get married. That isn't what the word hope means in the Bible. The Second Coming of Jesus is called "the blessed hope." How do we know that Jesus is coming again? We have God's promise. The Lord Jesus said in John 14:3, "If I go away, I will come again." "I will!" All right. Therefore, we have this hope like an anchor. You don't put an anchor in a cloudbank. You see, in Hebrews 16:9, the Bible calls hope "the anchor of the soul!"

Now, how did Joseph know this? How did Joseph know, after centuries we're coming out? His faith was rooted in the Word of God. I cannot say this emphatically enough. Listen to your pastor. Your faith is not going to exceed your love, your knowledge, your understanding of the Word of God.

There was a great evangelist of yesteryear. He was the Billy Graham of his day. His name was Dwight L. Moody. If you've studied church history, you've found the name Dwight L. Moody. He was not a literate man. He was basically uneducated. But his biographer said that he took two continents and shook them for God, a former shoe clerk. Moody felt that he needed faith. I need faith, you need faith. And Moody said he kept praying for faith and praying for faith and praying for faith, and faith didn't seem to come. And then he read our Scripture there in the Book of Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," and Moody stopped praying for faith and began to saturate himself in the Bible. There was the faith. Faith is the by-product of hearing from God. You can't have faith if you're merely guessing at the will of God. You can't have faith if you're just following a hunch. But when you say, "God said it, God said it and I believe it." You see, Joseph said, "You're surely coming out." How did he know this? Listen, his faith is resting in the unbreakable promises of God.

Now, not only does faith rest in the unbreakable promises of God, but, secondly, listen, **faith relies on the unshakeable power of God.** Why can you have faith? On the one hand, God says He can do it, He will do it. On the other hand, we know that God is able to do it. Now look again in Genesis chapter 50 verse 24, and, "Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swear to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob." Now, he believes in the unshakeable power of God.



Now his faith was there, contrary to evidence; I mean human evidence. When Joseph said this, there was no reason they should leave. I mean, after all, they'd already left Canaan because of a famine. Now they're in Egypt. They have it made. They are in a place of favor. They are in comfortable circumstances. Outwardly, there was no reason that they should leave. Now what they might have done, had they been like some moderns, they may have said, "Well, we'd better re-examine the promises in the light of present-day circumstances." Have you ever done that? Have you ever taken a promise of God and paraded it past the judgment bar of human reason? Looked at circumstances and said, "Well, perhaps it won't happen." No, the unshakeable power of God overcomes circumstances.

Also, listen, Joseph's faith was not shaken because of fickle emotions. Do you sometimes say, "Well, I just don't feel God is going to do this. I just don't feel it's going to be that way?" Well, really, Joseph's emotions didn't have anything to do with it. Feelings come and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving. Don't base your faith on how you feel about it.

Martin Luther, who led the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther in 1517 had a dramatic experience. He was saved. He saw the Word of God, and the Bible says in Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith," and he understood it, that salvation is a gift that you receive by faith, and he received Christ. He was born again, even though he had been a priest. One day, he had a bout with the devil, and the devil said to him, "Oh, you say you're a Christian. Do you feel your sin is forgiven?" Luther said, "No, I know my sin is forgiven because the Bible says so!" Now you better get out of the realm of emotion and get your faith not only in the unbreakable promises of God, but in the unshakeable power of God.

Years ago I heard of a youngster, a boy, who was saved in a revival crusade. The preacher preached from John 5:24, one of the great soul-winning promises in all the Bible, where Jesus is speaking. And Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." A great verse! The boy believed it. He passed from death unto life. He was saved and born again. He was happy going home with that verse in his mind. But he said on his way home from the revival meeting, this was his own testimony, he said, it seemed as though Satan was perched right there on his shoulder, whispering in his ear, and saying, "You're not saved. You're not good enough. You don't understand enough. You don't have the right feelings. You don't have the right emotions. You're not saved." And the devil just came after him. And friend, if you've never met the devil, it's because you and the devil have been going in the same direction. You turn around, you'll have a head-on collision. That's what this boy did. The boy went into the house. He sat down there on the couch, beginning to deal with the doubts. So he opened his Bible again to John 5:24 and began to read it. "Verily, verily," that means truly, truly, "I say unto you." He said, "Jesus is speaking," "he that heareth My word," he said, "I've heard it," "and believeth on Him that sent Me," he said "I believed in the God that sent Jesus Christ," "has everlasting life," he said, "I have everlasting life," "and shall not come into condemnation," "I will not come into condemnation," "but is passed from death unto life," "I have passed from death unto life."

The boy said, "As I sat there on the couch, it seemed like the devil was right under the couch, saying, 'You're not saved.'" He said, "I took my Bible and put it under the couch. I said, 'There, read it for yourself!'" The next time, friend, the devil gets on your case, you get the Word of God, and don't argue with the devil; make him argue with God. Make him argue with the promises of God, the unbreakable promises of God.



Joseph's faith was not stampeded by circumstances. Joseph's faith was not challenged by his emotion. Nor was Joseph's faith eroded by long delay. Now, friend, it had been a long time since God made that promise. 300 years have passed, 3 solid centuries, and there was more time yet to come. Notice, Joseph said, "Take my bones with you." He didn't say, "Take my body with you." Joseph knew that his body would be turned to mold and dust. The only thing would be left is a box of bones. But he says, "Take my bones with you." Joseph knew that time must pass, there was going to arise a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, and yet Joseph is standing on the Word of God. Listen to your pastor now. Don't you let circumstances, don't you let emotions, don't you let seeming delay keep you from believing the Word of God. Joseph was a man of faith, and Joseph said, "Take my bones with you." The centuries cannot erode away the promises of God.

Let me give you some ancillary verses: Habakkuk chapter 2 and verse 3. God said to Habakkuk, "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and will not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Now, Habakkuk. If you don't see it, remember God has an appointed time. Wait, I say, wait for it."

Let me give you another illustration of this, how God fulfills His promises through time. This is taken from the book of Ezekiel. There was an ancient, wicked city named Tyre down on the seacoast of the Mediterranean. The way they lived was an affront to the nostrils of God, a stench in the nostrils of God, an affront of the ways of God. And God prophesied that He was going to destroy Tyre, through the prophet Ezekiel. Put this verse down, Ezekiel chapter 26 and verse 3, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and I will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.'" Now this was a seacoast city, so "just as the waves come up against your shores, many nations are going to come up against you."

And then Ezekiel chapter 26 beginning in verse 12 through verse 14, "And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise, and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses," now watch this, verse 12, "and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee," watch this, "like the top of a rock. Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more. For I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord."

Now when God gave this promise, Tyre was one of the mightiest city states on Earth. And God said, "You're going to be destroyed. I'm going to tear down your walls. I'm going to tear down your houses. The timber, the dust, all of it is going to be cast into the sea. What used to be a city will be like the top of a bald rock where a fisherman can spread his nets."

The years passed. 550 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian, came. And he made siege of ancient Tyre and decimated it. The people of Tyre knew that Nebuchadnezzar was coming, and they slipped out of the city state of Tyre and made their way to an island a half mile off shore, and there they felt that they were safe from Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar decimated the city, but he left the walls, he left the houses, he left the timber. And the people had moved half a mile off shore and they rebuilt their city out there. But God said that the stones, the wall, the timbers, even the dust, is going to be cast into the sea. But there it stood.



215 B.C., over 300 more years, Alexander the Great was coming through the land, marching through in conquest. He asked the people of Tyre to help him. They didn't see any need to help him. Alexander had an army, but he didn't have a navy. Tyre, now out there in the ocean, had a very strong navy. So they said to Alexander, "We're not going to help you." Alexander the Great was infuriated. He gave a command to his generals. He said, "Build a causeway out to that island." It was a half mile out through the sea. He said, "Build a causeway." They said, "What are we going to build it with?" He said, "Take these walls, take these timbers, take these ruins and build a causeway." And they built a causeway out to ancient Tyre. And in order to do it, they scraped the former place like a bald rock, not a stone, not a timber left. All of it thrown into the sea so Alexander the Great could march his armies out against Tyre.

What did God say? God said, "Look, the stones are going to be cast into the sea. The timber's going to be cast into the sea. The dust is going to be cast into the sea. It's going to be a place where fishermen now will dry their nets." You see, somebody said, "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine." The promises are not eroded away by time, not by emotion, and not by circumstances.

Are you following? I said that Joseph's faith, number one, was rooted in the unbreakable promises of God. And then I said, number two, that Joseph's faith relies on the unshakeable power of God. "God will surely bring you out." Do you believe that God has the power to do what He says He will do? I hope you do. And I hope that you don't let your emotions and circumstances and time erode away the promises.

Now, let me tell you, friend, that when God says something, He's going to do it. I'm glad that Joseph did not try to allegorize or explain away these promises like some do in the Bible today. I like what that little girl said, "If God didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant."

Now, some of us are wondering, is Jesus coming again? Well, you say, "It's been so long." The Bible prophesies there's going to be people like that. Second Peter chapter 3 and verse 4. They're going to be saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But he says in Second Peter chapter 3 and verse 8, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Now God doesn't punch a time clock when He goes to work. God doesn't wear a wristwatch. God is not concerned with time. God will do what He says He will do. Joseph said, "God will surely bring you out." He had the promise; he knew the power.

Now let's come to the third and final thing of this study today. Faith that believes the unbreakable promise of God. That relies on the unshakeable power of God. That **results in the unmistakable peace of God**, the unmistakable peace of God. Now look again in Genesis chapter 50 verse 24. Joseph said, "Look, I die, and God will surely visit you, and He's going to bring you out." Now here's a man dying in peace. Do you know how he's dying? Here's old Joseph. He's there. They're bringing his grandchildren in to him. And he's dangling his grandchildren there and his great grandchildren upon his knees. There's not a hint of panic here. Here is a man who is stepping into glory in perfect peace. He said, "Look, take my bones with you."

Now did this happen? Let me give you some verses, Exodus chapter 13 now, just put it in your margin; you don't have time to turn to it. I've copied it out for you. Exodus 13 verses 18 and 19, "But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea; and the children of Israel went





up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.” Now watch this, verse 19, “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had straightly sworn the children of Israel, saying, ‘God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones from hence with you.’” And so when they got ready to go, they said, “Get old Joe’s bones. Here we go.” Moses said to the man, “You carry the bones. Let’s go on through the wilderness.”

Now, Moses led them all the way to Canaan but, you know, Moses didn’t get to go into Canaan. It was Joshua that led them into Canaan. So read now in Joshua chapter 24 verse 32, “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.” Now, just as Joseph believed and prophesied, Moses carried the bones across the burning sands of the Sinai. And then Joshua carried his bones across Jordan and into Canaan. Big question: why all of this fuss about his bones, anyway? What difference did it make to Joseph? Why did Joseph say, “Take my bones with you?”

Now, have you been to Egypt? I’ve been to Egypt on a number of occasions. I’ve seen the pyramids. I’ve been inside The Great Pyramid. I’ve been in the Egyptian Museum. I’ve seen the sarcophagus of old King Tut and all of the immense accoutrements that were surrounding his death and burial. Joseph could have done that. Joseph could have built himself a monument there in Egypt. Joseph could have had himself embalmed and enshrined there with great glory and circumstance and pomp. Why did he not do that himself? He had the power to do it and he had the wealth to do it.

I’ll tell you why. Joseph is saying, “I want to be a part of what God is doing.” Joseph knew; he took the long look. He knew that success and wealth and power and everything else this world has to offer is so temporary. I believe that’s the reason God could trust him with such wealth and with such power. Now had he built a magnificent tomb, doubtless, it would have been plundered. All of those tombs have been plundered. They’re looking for more of them so they can plunder them.

I’ve been to the British Museum. You need to go sometime. Go into that room where they keep the mummies. I’m so glad Joseph is not there. When you could say, “Well, this is the mummy of old Joseph.” No, it’s not there. Joseph, you don’t find him in any of this. Joseph is buried in an obscure grave somewhere in the land of Canaan called Shechem. Why did he do this? He is wanting not a monument to pride, but a monument of faith, that he believed God. He’s identifying with what God is doing.

You see, Joseph knew that when he died and they put his bones in a coffin, that God was not finished with those bones. And you’re going to die, if Jesus tarries. And if we wait long enough, our bodies are going to turn to dust and our bones will be about the only thing left. But notice what the Bible says in Daniel chapter 12 verse 2, “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the Earth shall awake; some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Or listen to what Jesus said in the New Testament. John chapter 5 verses 28 and 29, “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and they shall come forth. They that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

I’m telling you, everybody here is going to be raised from the dead; everybody. Don’t get the idea that just Christians are going to be raised from the dead. Everybody’s going to be raised, the saved and the lost. You can’t crawl up in the grave and pull the dirt over your face and hide from God. There is coming a resurrection, and Jesus said, “All that sleep in the Earth shall hear the voice of the Son of Man.”





They're going to come forth. They are going to come forth, either of the resurrection, they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life.

Now here's a box of bones, and old Joseph, I don't know how much of this he knew, but it is certainly true, there's a great getting up morning coming. Can you imagine those bones talking to one another? They might have laughed a little bit. You might have heard a chuckle from a knuckle, and seen a grin from a shin, and a little glee from a knee, and a lot of ribbing going on, because those bones are going to lie down for a while in the grave.

An old spiritual says what? "Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around." There is coming a getting-up day! There is coming a resurrection! This is not fantasy! This is not make believe! The great prophet Daniel said it would happen! Jesus said it would happen! You, my friend, are going to rise from the dead, either to be swept into the arms of the Lord Jesus Christ, or to meet in the judgment a God that you do not know. But there's a resurrection coming. And I wonder, are you ready for that resurrection?

We, too, are going to have an exodus. Put these Scriptures down, Philippians 3 verses 20 and 21, "For our conversation is in Heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Do you know what that Scripture says? Take a look. You see this old body. The Bible calls it a vile body. I'm going to be like Jesus. You say, "You arrogant rascal." Well, then, go, look in the mirror, and say that about yourself. I'm going to be like Jesus.

We're looking for Jesus. Our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Savior. "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus." Can you imagine being transformed into the likeness of our Lord? I submit to you either that's true or it's not true. How many of you believe it's true? Now, friend, it's true. We're dealing with truth here. First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 54 through 58, "So when this corruptible," that means that which decays, "when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal," that means that which dies, "shall have, shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" And then, here's old Paul as he taunts death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I don't know how much of this old Joseph knew, but I know that he, by faith, gave commandment concerning his bones.

Death is a fact, my friend. You say, "You're trying to frighten me?" No, I'm trying to comfort you. I'm trying to take away the fear of death. One of these days, death will lay his icy hands on you. One of these days, death will blow his cold breath on you. One of these days, your feet will touch the chilly waters of Jordan. You may die as a child and let go of your little toys. You may die as a young mother and kiss your helpless babies goodbye. You may die as an educated doctor and write your last prescription. You may die suddenly in an automobile accident on the way home from church. Or you may put on your pajamas and die peacefully. "But it's appointed unto man once to die."

There was a time when death laid his bony hands on the Lord Jesus Christ, drug Him into a dungeon, put Him on a cold slab. Jesus was bound with the chains of death. One day passed. Two days passed. Three days passed. And death, that old monarch of terrors, laughed his hoarse laugh and clapped his bony hands, and says, "I have Him." On the third day, He broke those chains, rose up. A look of fear is



on the face of the sinister minister of fear, death himself. Jesus reaches up, pulls death from his throne and throws him to the dungeon floor. The crown rolls off death's head. Jesus reaches in and pulls the sting out of death, puts His heel on the neck of death, puts the crown on His head, and walks out of that tomb risen, living, victorious as Savior. And because He lives, we live with Him. We no longer fear death. We no longer fear death because we have a Savior, a dear, loving Savior. Faith relies on the unbreakable promises of God. Faith recognizes the unshakeable power of God. And faith rests in the unmistakable peace of God. Aren't you glad that we have such a Savior?

Why don't folks get saved? Why would people refuse Jesus? Can't you see the sinfulness of a human heart that people would refuse such a Savior? Don't you want to receive Him? "As many as receive Him, to them gives He the power to become the sons of God."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. I want to help you to pray right now to ask Christ into your heart. Would you pray this way? "Lord Jesus, I believe You're the Son of God. I believe You shed Your blood on the cross and paid my sin debt. I believe You were raised from the dead. And now by an act of faith, I receive You into my heart as my Lord and Savior. I'm ashamed of my sin. I'm sorry for my sin. I repent of my sin. I turn from sin. I turn to You, Lord Jesus. Come into my heart; forgive my sin; save me, Jesus." Friend, say it and mean it. "Save me, Lord Jesus." Did you mean it? If you really mean it, pray this, "Lord Jesus, I now will live for You because You died for me. And I will not be ashamed to confess You openly because I believe that You're the Son of God. Amen."



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