

STUDY NUMBER TEN - Genesis 48:1-22

INTRODUCTION:

(*When the Hurt Won't Go Away* by Paul W. Powell)

Each time I think about my own death, I ask myself three kinds of questions to help me do that:

"Am I right in my relationship with God?"

"Am I right in my relationship with my family, with my friends, with my co-workers? Are there relationships I need to reconcile? Are there words I need to say?"

"Am I investing myself in things that will last for eternity?"

The more I look to the life to come, the more nobly it makes me want to live the life I now have.

(*Necessary Losses* by Judith Viorst)

"All human relationships must end," Kernberg reminds us in discussing the characteristics of mature love, "and the threat of loss, abandonment and, in the last resort, of death is greatest where love has most depth." But awareness of this offers something more than a glimpse into grim reality; "awareness of this," he writes, "also deepens love."

The earliest text on the subject, she tells us, was produced by the Egyptian philosopher-poet Ptahhotep, who voiced back in 2500 B.C. a theme that has resounded through the centuries:

How hard and painful are the last days of an aged man! He grows weaker every day; his eyes become dim, his ears deaf; his strength fades; his heart knows peace no longer; his mouth falls silent and he speaks no word. The power of his mind lessens and today he cannot remember what yesterday was like. All his bones hurt. Those things which not long ago were done with pleasure are painful now; and taste vanishes. Old age is the worst of misfortunes that can afflict a man.

In our study in the life of Joseph, we have progressed to the point of reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

In our last study in Genesis 46, Jacob sets out on his journey to the south and west. When he comes to Beersheba, he stops and offers sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Jacob and told him not to be afraid, to go down into Egypt because he was going to make him a great nation, and he was surely going to bring him up again.

Everybody who had gone down to Egypt before had gotten into trouble and was out of the father's will while there. Jacob just needed some reassurance, and he takes the time for worship and praise from a heart filled with joyful anticipation that he's going to get to see again his much-loved son alive.

All of his family and the livestock left and went down to Egypt.

When the company got to the region of Goshen, Jacob sent Judah on before him to Joseph. Joseph prepared his chariot and went on up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

Then Joseph went to tell Pharaoh about the fact that all of his family had come into the land of Egypt.

Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, the best of the land and the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.

And Joseph provided for his father and his brothers and all his household with food according to their little ones.

Now Israel lived in the land of Egyptian Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, so the length of Jacob's life was 147 years. They were in Egypt, then, for five years of famine and then for twelve more good years.

As the study ended, we read these words:

Genesis 47:29-31

When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." "I will do as you say," he said. "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Jacob is still lingering to a slender thread of life as the scene of today's study opens. Joseph is now 56 years of age, and his father 147.

This now prepares us for the verses in Genesis 48 which come under consideration:

v. 1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him.

Our chapter opens with the little phrase "some time later."

This takes us back to chap. 47:29 where Joseph took an oath that he would fulfill his father's desires:

Genesis 47:29

When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt."

Jacob longs to be buried back up in Hebron with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and his wife Leah.

Because this was not the exact day or time for Jacob to die, Joseph finds it necessary to go back to the business of the palace. Many times relatives and close friends almost feel like they are suspended in space and time no longer can be planned because everything is on hold. For some, it is a long, arduous, patient process of waiting for the slow death of a loved one.

Joseph has pressing responsibilities to care for and thus returns to his work.

Beth Jameson, the mother of a 14-year-old who is dying of leukemia, says,

After they leave, the aloneness, stillness, and quietness of the house close in around me. The dust on my dresser across the room looks an inch thick. The dirty clothes hamper is bulging. The carpet needs vacuuming, and here I am in bed just barely able to take care of myself. That old enemy self-pity takes over once more as my concern over trivia looms all out of proportion.

And so I create a monster of sweeping under the rug a delusive habit, but it is the only way I know to keep some semblance of normalcy in our lives for emotions are like mirrors. They reflect and bounce off one another. God, I'm no psychiatrist. Help me! What am I to say? What am I to do? It's like walking on eggshells every day trying to keep everybody reasonably happy and productive. I need more than mere courage, God. I need perseverance and stamina. Help me not to resist these trying demands leukemia is imposing on my life too. It would only increase the pain. As days go by, the need to endure seems to increase my capacity to do so.

A message again is sent to Joseph: "Your father is ill."

The time has now come for the PATRIARCHAL BENEDICTION.

It is recorded that Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. I am sure that both of the boys who probably are in their late teens or early twenties wanted to go and see their granddad for the last time. I would imagine that Jacob has tried to really relate to these boys during the last 17 years that he has lived in the land of Egypt.

Genesis 47:31

"Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Hebrews 11:21

By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

How interesting it is that the spirit of God would pick up this occasion which is before us and put it in the record in the book of Hebrews as the most significant act performed by Jacob.

Here in Genesis 48 Jacob will adopt and bless these two sons of Joseph, and then in Genesis 49 he will have words for all twelve of the sons.

v. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.

The news of Joseph's coming revived the spirit of Jacob.

I can remember a number of years ago a very dear and close personal friend that I had had the privilege of leading to Jesus Christ was stricken with cancer and was in the final stages of slipping in and out of a coma. When I arrived at the hospital, he had been in a coma for about 17 hours. When his wife and I walked into the room, she said, "Don is here." He opened his eyes, blinked and smiled and began to talk about having a party. He really did have one because in less than 24 hours he was home with the Lord.

Old Jacob collected his waning strength and sat up in the bed to perform the function which God had intended for him to perform.

Jacob has now been 17 years in the land of Egypt. He is 147 years old. It is now 12 years after the famine has ended.

v. 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me

Jacob is now going to recount the events of his life which have had the most meaning. He said nothing of his birth or home life or of Esau and the acquisition of the birthright and blessing. But his first memorable experience is when he met God Almighty. It is at conversion that we begin forgetting those things which are behind and press toward those things which are in front.

Truly, at the time of our new birth, we experience the first day of the rest of our lives. Life really begins here.

This was when he was on his way to Haran to spend the twenty years with Uncle Laban that Jacob rested the first night away from home and saw in a dream a stairway reaching to heaven--God at the top of the stairs.

Genesis 28:15

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

It is interesting that he refers to God as being *El Shaddai* or God Almighty, the God who is faithful to keep His promises and who does not need our help or assistance in the accomplishment of them. It was this God Almighty who appeared to him at Luz or Bethel in the land of Canaan and blessed him.

It is 25 years later and Jacob once again hears these words:

Genesis 35:1

Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there and build an altar there to God who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

v. 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'

Jacob is now recounting the words from the Lord at Bethel, and these words are just a recounting of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 28:13, 14

There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

It is interesting that Jacob uses the word "everlasting," which did not occur in the word from the Lord in Genesis 28 but was very clearly spoken in the covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 17.

There were perhaps many experiences in Jacob's childhood when his grandfather Abraham shared with him the words of the covenant and the experiences which he himself had had with God. And thus he has always assumed that the promise given to Abraham was to be applied to him in the sense that it would be an everlasting possession.

That everlasting possession involved two things:

1. A seed
2. A land

v. 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine.

1 Chron. 5:1, 2

The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph)

Here Jacob is making a transfer of the birthright from Reuben to Joseph and is adopting Joseph's two sons as his own. "Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine. I am adopting them and I consider them as my own."

It is interesting--as Jacob refers to the boys he refers to the younger first and then the older second. Ephraim is the youngest of the two.

This should be suitable preparation for Joseph to make the adjustments in his own thinking as to what is going to be taking place in a few brief moments.

God many times prepares us for what is ahead, especially if it's going to run contrary to our wishes and desires.

Ephraim and Manasseh are probably in their early twenties on this occasion, and because of their position in Egypt, they will have to make some pretty big choices. I am sure they have had illusions of grandeur and of pomp and of power and having the prestige of being in a position of leadership and following in the steps of their father.

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the vast pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

For Joseph and the boys it is going to take an act of faith to look beyond the present circumstances to see that God is in control of the events that are happening on this occasion.

I am sure as the boys have grown up they have watched their father triumphantly see God's purpose in all of the circumstances of his life, so therefore we will trust they have the same faith and confidence in God residing in them.

v. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers.

Should Joseph have any other children, these children will be identified with their brothers Ephraim and Manasseh in their inheritance.

Jacob is honoring the memory of his much-loved wife Rachel with three tribes, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh.

v. 7 As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

The first event that Jacob recalls to Joseph is the conversion experience on the way to Uncle Laban's house in Genesis 28. The second event that comes to his mind is the sorrow of losing Rachel in childbirth while they were still traveling homeward.

Being with Joseph and speaking of the two boys reminds Jacob of his much-loved wife Rachel.

In Bethel, having followed God's instructions, Jacob erects a pillar of fellowship. Then just down the road in Bethlehem, he erects a pillar of sorrow.

A lot of the sorrow in our lives is explained by the fact that we love the things we shouldn't.

2 Samuel 12:15ff

After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused. And he would not eat any food with them. On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead for they thought, While the child was still living we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate.

(The Life of D.L. Moody by W. R. Moody)

God had ordained something other than unbroken joy for the happy grandfather. His only grandson and namesake, who was born on November 7, 1897, was taken home on November 30, 1898, while Mr. Moody was absent in Colorado. In a letter to the parents, written from Colorado Springs, he said:

"...I know Dwight is having a good time, and we should rejoice with him. What would the mansions be without children? He was the last to come into our circle, and he is the first to go up there! So safe, so free from all the sorrow that we are passing through! I do thank God for such a life. It was nearly all smiles and sunshine, and what a glorified body he will have, and with what joy he will await your coming! God does not give us such strong love for each other for a few days or years, but it is going to last forever, and you will have the dear little man with you for ages and ages, and love will keep increasing. The Master had need of him, or He would not have called him; and you should feel highly honored that you had anything in your home that He wanted.

"I cannot think of him as belonging to earth. The more I think of him the more I think he was only sent to us to draw us all closer to each other and up to the world of light and joy. I could not wish him back, if he could have all earth could give him. And then the thought that the Saviour will take such good care of him! No going astray, no sickness, no death. Dear, dear little fellow! I love to think of him, so

sweet, so safe, and so lovely! His life was not only blameless, but faultless; and if his life here was so sweet, what will it be up there? I believe the only thing he took away from earth was that sweet smile, and I have no doubt that when he saw the Saviour he smiled as he did when he saw you, and the word that keeps coming to my mind is this: 'It is well with the child.' Only think of his translation! Thank God, Dwight is safe at home, and we will all of us see him soon.
"Your loving father, "D. L. Moody"

The next few months were filled with anxiety as his oldest grandchild, little Irene, was slowly recovering from a protracted and unusually persistent attack of pneumonia. Later it was found that the germs of consumption had become implanted in the weakened system, and after a few weeks' wasting illness she joined her little brother, just four months before their grandfather followed them. Mr. Moody's own deep affliction in the bereavement was hidden from the parents in his unselfish efforts to cheer and comfort them. At the funeral service of little Irene, unannounced and unexpectedly, he arose and paid the following tribute to the little life he loved so dearly:

"I have been thinking this morning about the aged prophet waiting in the valley of the Jordan, so many years ago, for the chariot of God to take him home. Again the chariot of God came down to the Connecticut Valley yesterday morning about half-past six and took our little Irene home. The one was taken at the end of years of active service; the other at the early dawn of youth. But the service of the prophet was not more complete than that of the little handmaid of the Lord, for God called both, and He never interrupts the service of His own.

"Irene has finished her course; her work was well wrought on earth. She had accomplished more than many in their threescore years and ten. We would not have her back, although her voice was the sweetest voice I ever heard on earth. She never met me once, since she was three months old, until the last few days of pain, without a smile. But Christ had some service for her above. My life has been made much better by her ministry here on earth. She has made us all better. She has been a blessing to all the conferences here this year. She has brought a wealth of sympathy into the meetings such as we have never had before. During the young men's conference I tried to keep it secret, but while I was on the platform my heart was over at the home. On the day after the conference closed she left for the Adirondacks, and we feared we might never see her again. During the women's conference my heart was yonder in the mountains at Saranac. The last night of that conference, while I was trying to speak to the young women words of cheer and encouragement, I was constantly thinking of the little girl, and within twelve hours I was by her side.

"The last few days have been blessed days to me. I have learned many new and precious lessons. She was very fond of riding with me, and on Monday morning, twenty-four hours before she fell asleep, she asked me to take her driving, and at 6:30 we were out together. She never looked more beautiful. She was just ripening

for heaven. She was too fair for this earth. I thank God this morning for the hope of immortality. I know I shall see her in the morning, more beautiful in her resurrection glory than she was here."

pp.537-541

Jacob in his old age is reverting back to one of those experiences of great sorrow. The first experience is the one of great joy when he meets the Lord at Bethel. But from there he travels on into the city of Haran, and at the home of his Uncle Laban where he serves seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days to him for the great love he had for her. I am sure Jacob is like a lot of old folks who enjoy living in the past and recounting memorable experiences. "Did I tell you the story about so-and-so?" And if we were truthful, we would have to say, "Yeah, you did just fifteen minutes ago," and yet with respect we hear it over again for the hundredth time.

Rachel had borne Jacob one son by the name of Joseph and prayed that she might be able to have another. She became pregnant with Benjamin, and while they were on their journey from Paddan up to Canaan, she died in childbirth. She was stricken along the way, and after having set up a tent and Benjamin was born, Rachel died in the giving of birth.

Rachel's parting words were meant to be the name of the son who was born: *Ben-Oni*, "Son of my pain." But Jacob changed that and called him Benjamin, "Son of my right hand."

I think Jacob did this because he did not want to linger in grief, remembering every time he called his name the painful loss of Rachel, his much-loved wife. Benjamin causes him to focus upon the fruit of that death.

Jacob says, "To my sorrow Rachel died." It was something that hurt him very deeply.

v. 8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

Jacob returns to the present and sees that Joseph has not come alone after all, but that there are some other people with him, and so he asks the question, "Who are these?"

Obviously, Jacob couldn't see too well. Neither could his father Isaac. Loss of eyesight in old age must have run in the family.

v. 9 "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

"They are the sons God has given me here."

1. Genesis 45:6 - "God sent me ahead of you."
2. Genesis 45:9 - "God has made me lord of all Egypt."
3. Genesis 48:9 - "They are the sons God has given me here."

God sent me.
God made me.
God gave me.

Joseph sees children as a gift from the Lord, even as Rachel probably many times in his youth had reminded him that he was a gift from the Lord, for prior to his birth she was barren and without child.

For a brief period of time, he was Rachel's only child. I am sure she often said, "You are so special, for you are a gift from the Lord."

It is the request of Jacob that Joseph bring them to him so that he can bless them.

Having made the statements of adoption back in the previous verses, he now is prepared to announce his blessing upon them.

v. 10 Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

Jacob had the same problem with vision that his father Isaac had and which he has used to his own advantage in his earlier years to acquire the blessing by deceiving Isaac, and now Jacob has the same infirmity. He could not see who was with Joseph and so the question of verse 8: "Who are these?"

"Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them."

v. 11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

What a fantastic statement this is from the lips of Jacob, and how different is this statement from numerous other ones that he has made in his earlier history.

Genesis 42:36

Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me."

Genesis 43:14

And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved.

Genesis 45:28

And Israel said, "I am convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

How good God is! for Jacob says, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

God is so good
God is so good
God is so good
He's so good to me.

I praise His name
I praise His name
I praise His name
He's so good to me.

Jacob had given up all hope of ever being able to see his much-loved son again.

How interesting it is that God waits for Jacob to make the expression of verse 14 of chap. 43: "If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." It is when he gives his children over to the Lord's care and keeping that the Lord now allows him to have this very special moment.

The announcement of the brothers on their return from Egypt that Joseph had sent for him stirred Jacob so deeply that in joy he had to say, "I am convinced! It's enough. I want to go see him before I die."

GOD IS EVER SURPRISING HIS PEOPLE WITH ADDED BLESSINGS BEYOND OUR EXPECTATIONS.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works within us.

Genesis 18:12

So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old will I now have this pleasure?"

It's like Sarah saying, "Who would have ever thought? This is something beyond our fondest dreams and expectations."

Psalm 126:5, 6

Those who sow in tears
will reap with songs of joy.
He who goes out weeping,
carrying his seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with him.

Jacob had thought it out. He had given up all hope. He never expected to see Joseph again, but now God is not only allowing him to see Joseph, but to live to see his children as well.

John 2:10

and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

This is certainly going to be the experience of each one of us as we step into glory: "You've saved the best till now."

1 Cor. 2:9

But just as it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.

This experience is shared with his grandfather Abraham who had the joys in the childhood days of Jacob and Esau of being able to spend at least fifteen years with these boys before Abraham died.

v. 12 Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

Joseph realizes the fact that the time has now come for his father's blessing to be upon him and through him to his sons.

v. 13 And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him.

Joseph is following the custom of the day in placing the firstborn at Jacob's right hand and the second born toward Jacob's left hand.

Joseph's full intention is to be helpful. He is feeling that he is helping out his blind father in the placing of the boys in proper position from a human point of view to receive the blessing.

v. 14 But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

As Jacob places his hands upon the heads of the boys, he crosses his hands and pronounces the blessing on the younger over the older.

How familiar all of this is. Jacob is not going to make the same mistake of his father Isaac in having to be deceived in order for God's purpose to be worked out in the blessing of Jacob over Esau.

It is God's purpose that Ephraim be the one and not Manasseh.

Here we have another illustration of God's sovereign choice which has so much filled the pages of the book of Genesis:

The choice of:

Seth instead of Cain
Shem instead of Japheth
Abraham instead of Haran
Isaac instead of Ishmael
Jacob instead of Esau
Ephraim instead of Manasseh.

How much we can see that Jacob has grown spiritually in his life. Many of the changes have come through the painful lessons of submission and obedience.

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

v. 15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my Shepherd all my life to this day,

Jacob now acknowledges the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac with whom they walked, and then he speaks of "the God who has been my Shepherd all my life to this day."

It is the Shepherd who leads, who feeds, who directs and guides our lives, and so Jacob recognizes that he has been kept and he has been fed and he has been led by the Shepherd of his life. Truly the Lord is his Shepherd.

Genesis 28:15

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

God has been faithful.

As he looks back on his life and can realize that in all of his journeys and experiences, the Lord has been a faithful Shepherd to use these experiences for good and growth in his personal life even to this day.

He must confess Isaiah 53:6--

We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way.

But with David in his old age, Jacob sees God as his Shepherd:

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul;
He guides me in paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of
my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the
days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

v. 16 The angel who has delivered me from all harm may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth."

Jacob in his reminiscence of key events in his life has mentioned:

1. Bethel and the time of meeting God at the top of the stairs.
2. Rachel's death at the birth of Benjamin.
3. And now, reference to the angel of the Lord that he wrestled with all night.

Genesis 32:24ff

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

God had to touch him physically to get him to respond spiritually.

Jacob now makes reference to another very significant experience in his life: the time when he wrestled with the angel of the Lord, the one who redeemed him from all evil, who brought him to a moment of helplessness and to a moment of personal trust in God's ability to faithfully fulfill His promises.

It is the wish of Jacob that his name may live on in them and the names of his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and then he wishes that they might grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

There are three wishes in the blessing:

1. May he bless these boys.
2. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.
3. May they increase greatly upon the earth.

v. 17 When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

Here Joseph feels that his father has made a mistake due to the fact that he is unable to see. When he sees that the hands have been crossed, it displeased him.

I am sure that because of what Joseph sees he misses the joy of the blessing that has just been spoken.

It is a tragic moment in our lives when we see the will of God cross our personal desires and wishes. And for Joseph, he is no exception. It displeases him.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

God will bestow His own blessing, and not according to our wishes and desires.

He grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's to Manasseh's. He felt that Jacob had made a mistake so he reaches out to correct the situation.

Joseph, the one who sent you into Egypt, who made you lord in Egypt, who gave you these two sons, is the one who also is blessing his own way.

v. 18 Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

Joseph already had his mind made up with regard to who was going to be receiving the blessing of the firstborn, and so he speaks to his father with the words, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

v. 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations."

Here is a beautiful act of submission to the will of God. Jacob refuses to do what Joseph suggests and then makes it clear to him that he knows what he is doing. Although he is old and feeble and not able to see, his mind can still be directed by the Spirit to the full accomplishment of the Father; and he is submissive to the Father's will in these circumstances.

The reason the Father often does things differently than we would think or plan is so that we may learn not to glory in the flesh, but in God alone.

The happiest people in the world are the people who are letting God do it His way.

Isaiah 55:8, 9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

v. 20 He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'" So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

You can trace it through the passage:

In Genesis 48:1 when Joseph was told about his father's illness, he took his two sons **MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM**.

And then when they arrive there, Genesis 48:5,

Jacob says, "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine, **EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH**."

And now we come to the time of blessing, and it is: "May God make you like **EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH**."

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh."

And now Jacob pronounces the blessing and the blessing is to put the younger ahead of the older: Ephraim before Manasseh.

v. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers."

I am your earthly father, Joseph, and I am about to die. But your heavenly Father will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you, and He will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

Genesis 28:20, 21

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father's house in safety, then the Lord will be my God."

There are no "if's" in Jacob's life now like there were way back when he made his vow in Genesis 28. It is "God *will* be with you." He knows with confidence and faith that God will be with him even though his earthly father is about to depart.

This is real faith.

"I am about to die" but in contrast:

1. God will be with you.
2. He will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

Robert Salstrom in his thesis *The Life of Faith* says,

Abraham points out the absolute necessity of giving up everything and counting nothing as dear except a wholehearted trust in God. On being called, he promptly and fully obeyed with unquestioning trust. God had told him this, and as the divine word was so real, he did not hesitate to surrender certainties at home for what seemed to be uncertainties, except for the fact that God's word was the most assured reality in his life.

Perhaps the best statement concerning his prompt obedience comes from the pen of Joseph Parker:

"Abraham believed God and said to sight, 'Stand back!' and to the laws of nature, 'Hold your peace!' and to the misgiving heart, 'Silence, thou lying temper!' He believed God."

This same faith is now manifested in his grandson Jacob, as he prepares himself to die.

v. 22 And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

He gives an extra portion to Joseph than he does to his brothers.

We are going to have a further statement of blessing upon Joseph in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION:

There are a number of lessons that we can gain from this particular study:

LESSON #1: Joseph displays a CARE and CONCERN for his father in the hour of his death.

LESSON #2: Jacob has grown spiritually through the many experiences that he has had.

LESSON #3: We find him resting in the PRESENCE and PROMISES of God as he recounts the covenant.

LESSON #4: We find him filled with gratitude over the past as he refers to God as the one who has shepherded him all his life.

LESSON #5: We see love in his heart toward others in his love for Joseph and his two sons.

LESSON #6: Children are a gift from the Lord. "They are the sons God has given me here."

LESSON #7: God is ever surprising His children with added blessings beyond their expectations.

v.11 "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well."

LESSON #8: God's will is accomplished even in the crossing of Jacob's hands to pronounce the blessing.

LESSON #9: We must be careful not to put our will and desires ahead of God's will for our lives.

LESSON #10: We begin to demonstrate faith when all our IF'S are changed to WHEN.

LESSON #11: Friends and loved ones die and leave us, but God will never leave us nor forsake us.