

# LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

## Sermon Eleven – “Uncle Joe’s Bones”

Texts: Hebrews 11:22; Genesis 47:29-31; 50:24, 25

**INTRODUCTION:** Today we will learn some lessons from Joseph’s life. Of all the information that there is in the Bible about Joseph (who is figuratively a type of the Lord Jesus Christ), the Holy Spirit summarized only one segment of his life in one verse in Hebrews 11:22--“*By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*” Notice these points with me:

- 1) “**made mention**” (*mnemoneuo*) means to remember; to exercise memory; to recollect.
- 2) “**departing**” (*exodus*) means to exit; journey.

Joseph on his death-bed remembered the **promise** of God that He had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give the land of Canaan to Abraham’s seed (Genesis 12:7; 13:5; 15:7). He also remembered the **prediction** that Abraham’s descendants would spend 400 years in bondage in a strange land, and afterward should be brought out. Genesis 15:13-14 says, “*And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.*”

### I. JOSEPH FORESHADOWS THE SAVIOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

He is the most complete typology of Christ in the Bible. Note some similarities:

- A. **Both were beloved by their fathers** (Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17).
- B. **Both regarded themselves as shepherds** (Genesis 37:2; John 10:11-14).
- C. **Both were sent to their brethren by their fathers** (Genesis 37:13-14; Luke 20:13; John 3:17; Hebrews 10:7).
- D. **Both were hated by their brethren without cause** (Genesis 37:4, 5, 8; John 1:11; John 7:5; 15:25).
- E. **Both were plotted against by their brethren** (Genesis 37:20; John 11:53).
- F. **Both were severely tempted** (Genesis 39:7; Matthew 4:1).
- G. **Both were taken to Egypt** (Genesis 37:36; Matthew 2:14-15).

- H. Both were stripped of their robes (Genesis 37:23; John 19:23-24).
- I. Both were sold for the price of a slave (Genesis 37:28; Matthew 26:15).
- J. Both were bound (Genesis 39:20; Matthew 27:2).
- K. Both remained silent and offered no defense (Genesis 39:20; Isaiah 53:7).
- L. Both were falsely accused (Genesis 39:16-18; Matthew 26:59-60).
- M. Both experienced God's presence through every trial (Genesis 39:2, 21, 23; John 16:32).
- N. Both were respected by their jailor (Genesis 39:21; Luke 23:47).
- O. Both were placed with two prisoners, one of which was later lost, and the other saved (Genesis 40:2, 3, 21-22; Luke 23:32, 39-43).
- P. Both were around thirty years old when their ministry began (Genesis 41:46; Luke 3:23).
- Q. Both were highly exalted after their suffering (Genesis 41:41; Philippians 2:9-11).
- R. Both took Gentile brides (Genesis 41:45; Ephesians 3:1-12).
- S. Both were lost to their brothers for a while (Genesis 42:7-8; Romans 10:1-3; 11:7-8).
- T. Both forgave and restored their repentant brothers (Genesis 45:1-15; Micah 7:18-19; Zechariah 12:10-12; Revelation 1:7).
- U. Both were visited and honored by all earthly nations (Genesis 41:57; Isaiah 2:2-3; 49:6).

## II. JOSEPH WAS A MAN OF FAITH

- A. We first saw Joseph's faith in God when he shared his dreams with his family (Genesis 37:5-10).
- B. His faith was expressed when Potiphar's wife sought to seduce him (Genesis 39:9).
- C. His faith was expressed when he trusted in God to give him an interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker (Genesis 40:8).

- D. Joseph's faith was shown in the presence of Pharaoh when he was brought out of prison to interpret Pharaoh's two dreams (Genesis 41:16).
- E. His faith was expressed in the naming of his children:
  1. "Manasseh" *"And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house."* (Genesis 41:51).
  2. "Ephraim" *"And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."* (Genesis 41:52).
- F. Joseph showed his faith by confessing his relationship with the true and living God when his brothers first came to Egypt (Genesis 42:18).
- G. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers after their second journey to Egypt, he believed it was God's will to save lives (Genesis 45:5-8).
- H. Joseph's faith is expressed when he confessed to his father Jacob (when Jacob was on his deathbed) that his (Joseph's) sons were gifts from God (Genesis 48:9).
- I. After his father's death, Joseph told his fearful brothers that they meant him harm, but God meant it unto good (Genesis 50:15-20).

When Joseph was near death, he remembered a promise that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and his father Jacob (Genesis 46:3). The writer of Hebrews chose these words of Joseph to tell us about the magnificent faith that Joseph had in God. What can we learn about Joseph's faith from these statements?

### III. FAITH REMEMBERS THE UNBREAKABLE PROMISES OF GOD

- A. Joseph said what he did because he was standing on an unbreakable promise of God (Genesis 50:24-26).
- B. Genesis 50:24-25 *". . . God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob . . . God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."*
- C. How did Joseph know the children of Israel were going to leave Egypt?
  1. Why was Joseph so certain about the Israelites leaving Egypt?
  2. Why was he so adamant?
  3. Obviously he knew the Word of God and believed God's promises!

D. God had made a promise to Abraham 300 years before Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel.

E. Genesis 15:13-14 *“And he said unto Abram, Know of a **surety** that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”*

F. God said it.

1. Joseph believed it.
2. This tells us something about faith.
3. We must have the Word of God and believe its promises to have faith.
4. You cannot have faith apart from the Word of God!

G. How does God communicate His Word to us?

1. How can we have faith like Joseph? (Read Romans 10:14-17).
2. Romans 10:17 *“So then faith cometh by **hearing**, and **hearing** by the word of God.”*
3. Here the reference is not to the whole Bible. This is not the **“word”** (*logos*—the revealed will of God; the written revelation of God; expression of thought).
4. This is the **“word”** (*rhema*)—an utterance; that which is spoken; a word from the Word of God; a word that God communicates personally to your heart; a personal word from God; a **rhema** from God.
  - a. This is the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for us in time of need.
  - b. Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4
5. **“hearing”** (*akoe*)—the thing heard; a message or teaching, a report; the word of the message; the word of hearing; the word preached; the receiving of a message “by hearing ye shall hear”.
6. Ephesians 6:17 *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*rhema*) of God:”*

H. It is the truth of the Word of God that generates faith in our hearts.

I. When God takes the truth of the Bible and makes that truth personal to you in a situation, that is, when you get a personal Word from Him, He uses His Word to speak directly to you. That is when you find faith growing in your heart and life.

#### IV. FAITH RELIES ON THE UNSHAKABLE POWER OF GOD

- A. **If we are going to believe in the unbreakable promises of God we must believe God has the power to fulfill His promises.**
- B. **Genesis 50:24** “. . . God will *surely* visit you, and bring you out of this land...”
- C. **Who was going to bring them out of the land? GOD!!**
- D. **Joseph’s faith was unshakable because it rested in the promises of God. Nothing can stop the promises of God!**
  - 1. Doubts, criticism, feelings cannot stop the promises of God!
  - 2. Circumstances and situations cannot stop the promises of God!
  - 3. Delays and detours cannot stop the promises of God!
  - 4. Distractions cannot stop the promises of God!
  - 5. The devil cannot stop the promises of God!
  - 6. Neither time nor death can stop the promises of God!

V. **FAITH RESULTS IN THE UNMISTAKABLE PEACE OF GOD**

- A. **Joseph is about to die and he is sure that the children of Israel will leave Egypt.**
- B. **Exodus 13:13-19** – God led the people.
- C. **After four hundred (400) years, the children of Israel are led out to Egypt by Moses.**
- D. **Moses could not go into the land of Canaan.**
  - 1. Numbers 20:1-12
  - 2. Deuteronomy 3:21-29; 34:1-6
- E. **God told Moses to charge Joshua to take the children of Israel into the Promise Land.**
  - 1. Deuteronomy 3:27-28
  - 2. Joshua 1:1-8; 24:31-32

**CONCLUSION:** What is the blessing in the box of bones? Why not bury Joseph in Egypt? He could have been buried in the pyramids of Egypt with the Pharaohs of Egypt. Joseph could have left to his sons the nobility of blood, a rich heritage in Egypt, but he brought them to his father to receive his blessing (Genesis 48:12). What was the blessing? It was to invest in them with the promise of entering the land, the Promise Land.

Can you imagine the Israelites having this box of bones the whole time they were in Egypt? If there was a time of slavery, adversity and misery, the children of Israel could look at that box of bones and say: **"This is not forever; we are leaving here."**

If there was a time of prosperity and ease, they could look at that box of bones and say: **"Don't settle down; we are leaving here."** This is not our home. Whether it was adversity or prosperity, the bones teach us about the brevity of life and the length of eternity. Joseph wanted to be linked with the people of God. He left a monument of faith.

At the end of Joseph's long and memorable life his thoughts were not so much occupied with what God had done for him, but with what God had promised His people. In other words, when he was near death, Joseph was not dwelling on the past, but on the future. In his heart were the ". . . *things hoped for* . . ." (Hebrews 11:1).

Even though he was to be put in a coffin in Egypt, Joseph wanted his bones carried out to the Promise Land. Joseph had his eyes on the future and on what God would do for His people in the future. The presence of Joseph's coffin with his bones inside was to be a constant reminder to the children of Israel of God's promises that they would inherit to the Promised Land.