

# Life in Egypt

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Genesis and chapter 46.

Genesis 46. And if we read again at verse 29. Genesis 46 at verse 29.

Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel, his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive. It was once said that meeting and parting is the way of life, but parting and meeting is the hope of life.

Meeting and parting is the way of life, but parting and meeting is the hope of life. Which, as you know, it's very true because in this life, we live, we love, and we lose.

[ 1 : 17 ] We live, we love, and we lose. We live life with family and friends. We love life with family and friends. But the last enemy, which is death, he is always present.

And he always brings loss of life to family and friends. In this life, we live, we love, and we lose. Because meeting and parting is the way of life.

But parting and meeting is the hope of life. And as you know, our only hope in life and in death is faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ who died upon the cross and was raised triumphant over the grave. That's our assurance. That's our confidence. That's our hope. And in Christ, our hope, as the Bible says, our hope is sure and steadfast.

Because he's the one who defeated death. He's the one who conquered the grave. He's the one who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And you know, my Christian friend, today, our Jesus, he is a risen and he is an exalted savior.

[ 2 : 26 ] And he stands over death. He stands over the grave. Saying, O death, where is thy sting? And O grave, where is thy victory? And you know, our response this morning, as we come to church, is that we can say this Lord's Day morning, thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because it's only through his death and resurrection that we have hope. It's only through his death and resurrection that we have the promise of resurrection.

We have the promise of renewal. And we also have the promise of reunion. And you know that those whom we live, love, and lose in this life, those who die in Christ, those who fall asleep in Jesus, as our catechism says, the souls of believers who are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory.

And their bodies still being united to Christ do rest in their graves until the resurrection. You know, our sure and steadfast hope this morning and every Lord's Day morning is that we are being reminded that one day we will see them again on that great resurrection morning.

On that great and resurrection morning. And you know, I say all that because that's the picture which has been portrayed and presented to us in our passage this morning.

[ 3 : 57 ] The picture that's been presented to us is that meeting and parting is the way of life. But parting and meeting is the hope of life. Because the hope and confidence that Jacob had when he entered Egypt was that he would see his son.

And he would see his son not as a slave, but as a saviour. And that he would see that his son is not dead, but alive. And so on entering Egypt, Jacob, we could say, he experienced and he enjoyed reunion in Egypt, renewal in Egypt, and even redemption in Egypt.

Jacob experienced and enjoyed reunion in Egypt, renewal in Egypt, and redemption in Egypt. And they're our headings this morning.

Reunion, renewal, and redemption in Egypt. So first of all, reunion in Egypt. We see reunion in Egypt. Look at verse 27 of chapter 46.

It says, The sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two. All the Persians of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy. He had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to show the way before him into Goshen.

[ 5 : 15 ] And they came into the land of Goshen. Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel, his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive. The evangelist Rico Tice, he's well known to some of you.

He is the face of Christianity Explored. And there are others in our congregation and I'd love to introduce you to Rico Tice because he is the face of Christianity Explored and he talks about, in Christianity Explored, it's a brilliant Bible study where he talks about who Jesus is, why Jesus came, and what Jesus wants you to do.

But on week five of Christianity Explored, Rico Tice speaks about the resurrection of Jesus. And when he introduces the subject, he says this. He says, Being reunited with those whom you love is one of the happiest experiences on earth.

The familiar face, the reassuring voice, the comforting embrace. But imagine, he says, what it would be like to be reunited with someone you thought you had lost forever.

[ 6 : 36 ] Not just someone who had changed jobs or moved away, but someone you thought you would never see again or could see again. And you know, that was Jacob.

That was Jacob because for over 20 years, Jacob believed what his sons had told him. He believed that Joseph had been caught and killed by a wild animal.

They even showed him, they showed their father Joseph's coat that was covered in blood. But of course, as we know the truth, and we've gone through the story, we know that Joseph, he was seized and separated and sold.

As a 17-year-old boy, he was sold into slavery in Egypt. And as we've considered the life of Joseph, we watched how the Lord has patiently worked out in his providence everything according to his perfect plan and purpose.

And that even though Joseph's brothers meant evil against him, the Lord meant it for good.

Joseph's heartache and hardship, it was for the purpose of protecting, and as we're seeing in this chapter, preserving the Lord's covenant promise to this family.

[ 7 : 47 ] And as we've repeatedly seen and said throughout the study of the life of Joseph, Joseph isn't actually the main character in the story because the Lord is the main character in the story.

The Lord is the author of the story. He's the director in the drama. He's the one who has written the storyline. And this family, they might not have understood the storyline. They might not have understood why things were happening the way they were.

They might not have foreseen all the twists and the turns in the narrative, but the Lord did. And the Lord knew what he was doing in the life of this family. And the Lord was at work in the life of this family because the Lord was interested in this family.

But you know, as we saw last Lord's Day, when Jacob's sons tried to convince their father to emigrate all the way to Egypt, it wasn't going to be easy.

Because as we read in the chapter, Jacob was a 130-year-old man. And Canaan had been his home for most of his life. It had been part of the family for generations.

[ 8 : 54 ] And so, Jacob's sons, in order to get him to move and emigrate to Egypt, they had to come clean. They had to confess their sin. They had to confess to their cover-up and explain to their father what had really happened to their son, Joseph.

And what they confessed was that Joseph was not dead, but alive. And that even though they had seized him and separated him and sold him into slavery, he was not a slave anymore.

He was now the saviour of the ancient world. But you know, when Jacob was convinced, and we saw this at the beginning of chapter 46, he confessed, he was convinced and he confessed, saying, Joseph, my son, my son Joseph, he's alive.

He's alive. I will go and see him before I die. And then, as we read in verse 30, Jacob says to Joseph, now let me die since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.

And so, we're reading in this chapter that Jacob and all his family, they took this 500-mile journey from Canaan all the way to Egypt. and Jacob took this journey believing that he would see his son face to face.

[10:16] And as we said, it was upon entering Egypt that Jacob experienced and he enjoyed reunion in Egypt. He experienced and he enjoyed reunion in Egypt.

And you know, I love what we're told in verse 29. Then Joseph prepared his chariot. He went up to meet Israel, his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

Verse 29 is a verse that's full of emotion because Joseph, he hasn't seen his father in over 20 years. And Jacob, he had believed that his son was dead for over 20 years.

And yet, in the sweet providence of God, they are reunited together. And when father and son see one another and when they embrace one another and when Jacob and Joseph come together, they weep with one another.

And you know, it must have been a moving moment for them as a family. But you know, what's more is that when you read the verse, it's as if Joseph doesn't see anyone else.

[11:22] He doesn't see all this family that have come into Egypt. He doesn't see his nieces and nephews who were born while he was in slavery. He doesn't have eyes for anyone else in his family except his father.

He only had eyes for his father. And Joseph, he went to him and he wept with him. But you know, as we said, this passage, it portrays and it presents to us the picture of resurrection and reunion. And as we've often said in our study, there are many similarities between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus. This Old Testament story in the book of Genesis, it illustrates to us and it illuminates for us what is to come in the New Testament.

And that's what we see here because, as you know, Joseph, he was one who was humbled. He was humiliated. He was met with rejection and ridicule and ruin.

He was cast down, down, down into the pit, into what was the grave. He was seized by his brothers. He was stripped of his royal tunic of many colors.

[12:28] He was separated from his family and in his humiliation he was sold into slavery. But in God's perfect timing, Joseph was, he was exalted to prime minister.

He was made a savior, given all authority over the land of Egypt. But more than that, when Joseph revealed his identity, in the eyes of his father, Jacob, Joseph had been raised from death to life. Joseph, in the eyes of his father, Jacob, Joseph had been resurrected from the grave. He had been brought from death to life. And that's what brought about their reunion.

And you know, my friend, the life of Joseph, it contains all the language of the gospel. The life of Joseph contains all the language of the gospel.

Because as you know, the gospel, it's the good news. The good news that God so loved this world that he gave his only begotten son. News that you've heard throughout your life.

[13:32] But the wonderful thing is that in giving his son, our Jesus humbled himself from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem all the way down to the cross of Calvary.

He humbled himself down, down, down, from the crown to the cradle to the cross. And like Joseph, he was seized, stripped, separated, sold as a slave.

He was despised and rejected by men. He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Like Joseph, our Jesus, he was wounded. Our Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

But you know, more than that, according to the perfect plan, purpose, promise, and even the providence of God, our Jesus was highly exalted over death.

Death could not keep him. The grave could not hold him. He was raised and resurrected from death to life, from the grave to glory, from slave to savior.

[14:37] And his promise of eternal life gives to us the hope and assurance of resurrection. It gives to us the hope and assurance of reunion with those whom we have lived, loved, and lost in this world.

My friend, can you see that the life of Joseph, it presents to us this morning all the language of the gospel. Can you see that the story of Joseph, it illustrates for us and illuminates to us who Jesus is. Can you see that because of Joseph, life was in Egypt? There was life in Egypt. There was the hope of resurrection, renewal, and reunion for Jacob and his family.

And it's because of Jesus that we have the promise of new life, eternal life. There's the hope of resurrection, renewal, and reunion for you and your family.

My friend, this is a wonderful promise because in this life we live, we love, and we lose. In this life we live, we love, and we lose.

[ 15 : 43 ] Meeting and parting is the way of life, but parting and meeting is the hope of life. And our only hope is through this Jesus. Our only hope in life and in death is through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And so what we see here is that there was life in Egypt. There was life in Egypt. Jacob experienced and enjoyed reunion in Egypt. But secondly, there was life in Egypt because there was renewal in Egypt.

There was renewal in Egypt. So reunion in Egypt and renewal in Egypt. Renewal in Egypt. Look at verse 29. Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel, his father in Goshen.

He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.

Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me and the men are shepherds for they have been keepers of livestock and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.

[ 17 : 04 ] When Pharaoh calls you and says, What is your occupation? You shall say, Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.

Now as you know, it's often said that large doors swing on small hinges and in the Bible large themes swing on small words and that's because even the smallest word in the Bible it helps us understand the passage a bit better and I say that because we read there in verse 29 that when Joseph went up to meet his father we see that that was an illustration of the resurrection of Jesus. He goes up. Then there's also another phrase when Joseph presented himself before his father. It's an illustration of the renewal of Jesus and I say that because the word that's used to express Joseph's appearance before his father it's the same word that's used to express the appearance of God throughout the Old Testament but also the appearance of Jesus at the second coming where at an hour when we think not Jesus as in the words of Genesis 46 Jesus will present himself before us he will appear before us he will in the words of Jesus he will come in the glory of his father to judge the world and you know that's the thing about Jesus we will appear before him or he will appear before us we will appear before him or he will appear before us you know on our last day in this world whenever that day will be when we close our eyes on the scene of time we will appear before Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of our life in this world or on the last day the day of judgment

Jesus will appear before us and come in the clouds in the glory of his father with the holy angels with him we'll appear before him or he'll appear before us whichever way it is my friend we need to be ready we need to be ready that's why Jesus said therefore be ye also ready for at an hour when you think not the son of man will come and you know my unconverted friend whether here or at home this morning the Bible is reminding you you will appear before Jesus or Jesus will appear before you you will appear before him or he will appear before you but the question the question is are you ready to appear before Jesus are you ready for Jesus to appear before you are you ready to meet Jesus I think you know the answer to that question already because as an unconverted friend you and I both know that you're not ready for his appearing and you're not ready to meet Jesus but you need to be ready that's why we have the Bible that's why

Jesus speaks to us in the gospel and you need to be ready by coming to him by calling upon him by committing your life to him by confessing him as your Lord and Savior you need to come to this Jesus because the truth is you'll appear before him or he'll appear before you but you know my Christian friend this morning when it comes to the appearing of Jesus as Christians we are to live for it we're to look for it we're to long for it and we're to love it as Christians we're to live look long and love the appearing of Jesus that's why we pray in the Lord's prayer thy kingdom come thy will be done we're to live look long and love his appearing that's what Paul said isn't it Paul said as he neared the end of his life he knew that he was going to appear before Jesus but he still lived and looked and longed and loved the appearing of Jesus he longed for the day that Jesus would come

[ 21 : 43 ] Paul at the end of his life he said I fought a good fight I have finished the course I have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award me on that day and not to me only but also to all who love his appearing and so my Christian friend we must love his appearing we must look for his appearing we must long for his appearing and we must live for it because whether we appear before Jesus or he appears before us now the wonderful thing is when we see him we shall be like him and see him even as he is in all his beauty and all his glory now as Paul says we see through a glass darkly but on that day like it was for Joseph and Jacob we will see him face to face but you know there is more here because Jacob he discovered life in Egypt and when he discovered life in Egypt he enjoyed and he experienced renewal in Egypt and the renewal came not only through meeting with Joseph but also through the mediation of Joseph because when

Joseph went up to meet his father and when he appeared before his father we read in verse 31 Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him my brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me Joseph promised that he would mediate a message on behalf of his family Joseph promised that he would intercede an instruction on behalf of his family but there was an interesting reason why Joseph had to intercede on behalf of his family because we're told we read it earlier at the very end of the chapter we're told that every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians that's what it says in the last verse every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians now to call someone or even a family a whole family to address them or to describe them as an abomination it seems like a bit of a harsh criticism but this isn't actually the first time we've seen this statement in the Bible because you'll remember when Joseph was a slave in Egypt the Egyptians they refused to eat with Joseph because it was an abomination to the Egyptians and then when you go into the book of Exodus we're told that all the sacrifices that were offered to the Lord while the children of Israel were still in Egypt we're told that it was an abomination to the Egyptians and here the fact that Joseph's family are shepherds we're told that it was an abomination to the Egyptians we have to ask the question why why is this an abomination to the Egyptians why is sitting with Egyptians or sacrificing or even having shepherds why is that an abomination to the Egyptians well it seems that the issue was that the Egyptians they not only used cattle and sheep for milk and wool they also worshipped them in fact the Egyptians they worshipped I can't really pronounce it but Kanum who's said to be the god of fertility and he was maybe you've seen pictures of him he's represented with a ram's head and a man's body but of course for Joseph's family or Jacob's family they worshipped the lord they worshipped the covenant king the creator of heaven and earth and they too would have used cattle and sheep for milk and wool but instead of worshipping the animals as you know they sacrificed them and they ate the animals and so it seems that Joseph's family were considered an abomination to the Egyptians because the Egyptians were vegetarian but you know there's nothing new under the sun I remember Suraj telling me Suraj was a student who studied with me in the Free Church College he's now back in his home in Nepal he's preaching the gospel to a predominantly Hindu country but it was Suraj who said that many Hindus think of the people in the west they think of them as an abomination because they all eat beef and you know Hindus they're vegetarian they worship 33 million gods and the cow is considered to be sacred a sacred symbol of life that should be protected and revered but we eat beef we're cow eaters in the minds of Hindus we are god eaters and to them that's an abomination and so you can think about that when you're enjoying your Sunday roast later on but you know even though Joseph's family were an abomination to Pharaoh Joseph we see he intercedes on behalf of his family Joseph intercedes on behalf of his family which again is a wonderful reminder and a reassurance of what Jesus does on behalf of his family because like Joseph our Jesus he's a risen and exalted saviour who ever lives to make intercession for his family he ever lives to make intercession he is the mediator between God and men and he is the man the middle man Christ Jesus and you know I love what I love about this this thought is that where Jesus acts as mediator and intercedes for his family I love this thought because you know when you read through Romans 8 wonderful chapter we're reminded there that in Christ those who are Christians you my

[ 27 : 50 ] Christian friend this morning we're reminded in Romans 8 that there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus there's no separation to those who are in Christ Jesus and as those who are in Christ we have received that spirit of adoption we've been brought

into the family of God where God is our father as Calvin says the church is our mother the Lord's people are our brothers and sisters and Jesus is our elder brother and as our elder brother Jesus acts as our mediator he is our advocate with the father he intercedes on our behalf he is our great high priest but more than that the wonderful truth is as it was for Joseph's family who didn't know what to say to Pharaoh they didn't know what to say Joseph had to tell them what to say to Pharaoh and just like when we don't know what to say in prayer the wonderful thing is when we pray about the sins or the sicknesses or the sufferings or the sorrows of a life and yet through our union with Christ we're told in Romans 8 the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf why? because he knows the sighs that cannot be spoken and he knows the groans that cannot be uttered and he knows the silent tears that are often shed which should remind us and reassure us and renew our will as Paul says in Romans 8 that those who love God all things are working together for good to those who are the called according to his purpose wonderful promises in God's word that we ought to cling to my Christian friend but you know my unconverted friend this is what you're missing this is what you're missing by not coming to Jesus for salvation you're missing out on these wonderful promises not only in this life but also in the one to come you're missing out on life itself by staying where you are and not coming to Jesus and so there was reunion in

Egypt renewal in Egypt and lastly we see redemption in Egypt redemption in Egypt look at verse 13 of chapter 47 verse 13 now there was no food in all the land for the famine was very severe so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine and Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan in exchange for the grain that they bought and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house and when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said give us food why should we die before your eyes for our money is gone and Joseph answered give your livestock and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock if your money is gone so they brought their livestock to Joseph and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses the flocks the herds and the donkeys he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year now as you know when Pharaoh had his dream his dream about seven fat cows and seven thin cows the Lord had asserted and affirmed that there would be seven years of plenty and then seven years of poverty and it was during those seven years of plenty that Joseph filled up all those storehouses in Egypt and it was all to prepare for the seven years of poverty and so by this point we have already been through the seven years of plenty and now they're halfway through the seven years of poverty and as we read there was no food in all the land because the famine was severe in the land the people of Egypt they had spent all their resources buying grain from Joseph's storehouses but now they have no money left they're poverty stricken and they're all starving they have nothing to cling to nothing to claim and they say that rather than die in their current situation they go to Joseph they go to Joseph the savior of the ancient world and first of all we see Joseph as we just read there he offers the people food in exchange for livestock and so the people they come with their horses and their cattle and their sheep and their donkeys and they give to Joseph all that they have in exchange for food from his storehouse but it doesn't last long because as you read through the narrative they're back the following year they come back the following year with no food and now no money and also no livestock and again they say rather than die in their current condition they again go to Joseph the savior of the ancient world and they confess to Joseph that they have nothing left but the land that they live on they have nothing left but their land and their life and so the people say down in verse 19 the people say why should we die before your eyes both we and our land buy us and our land for food and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh and give us seed that we may live and not die and that the land may not be desolate this poverty stricken people they come to Joseph the savior of the ancient world and they say to him buy us redeem us redeem us so that we may not die redeem us so that we may not die and that's what

Joseph did Joseph bought the people Joseph redeemed the people and you carry on down you read in verse 23 Joseph says behold I have this day bought you behold I have this day bought you I have bought you I have redeemed you I have redeemed you and as you know my friend as we said this is the language of the gospel where our Jesus he comes to us in the gospel and he promises to redeem us he promises to buy us back and he buys us back as Peter says not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but by his own precious blood our Jesus promises to redeem us when we come to him confessing that our righteousness is as filthy rags our Jesus he promises to

redeem us when we come to him in the poverty of our sin he promises to redeem us when we come to him knowing that if we stay where we are today we will die in our sin you know my unconverted friend listen to this listen to this listen to what the gospel is saying to you our

[ 35 : 10 ] Jesus promises to redeem us when we come to him saying just like the hymn writer nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling naked come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace foul eye to the fountain fly wash me savior or I die that's how we're to come to Jesus realizing that we have nothing to present to him nothing of ourselves nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling that's how these people came to the savior of the ancient world they came with nothing in their hands and they sought salvation and that's how we should come to Jesus this morning come with nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling do you know my there was life in

Egypt because there was reunion renewal and redemption and you know that's what Jesus promises you this morning he promises you reunion renewal and redemption he promises you life life life eternal life and he promises you when you come echoing the words of the hymn writer nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling my friend you come you come empty handed and you come to this cross and you come to this Jesus and you come and cling to him for time and for eternity and may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for the power of the resurrection that that resurrection promises to us a reunion at the last day it promises us renewal day by day and it promises us redemption where we are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but by the precious blood of Christ and help us then this morning to come with empty hands realizing that we have nothing to present to thee we have no righteousness of our own we have no money in our pocket that is worthy of God and that we are just to come saying nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling all keep us clinging clinging to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith go before us we pray take away our iniquity receive us graciously for Jesus sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing to God's praise in psalm 16 psalm 16 it's in the sing psalms version on page 17 psalm 16 singing from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm psalm 16 is the psalm of the empty tomb it's the psalm that reminds us that

Jesus is not dead but he is living and he promises us a path of life divine that's what we see in verse 11 psalm 16 before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown from verse 8 down to the end of the psalm to God's praise before me constantly I said the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I love me overthrown therefore my heart is bad my tongue with joy will sing my body true will rest secure in home and with a free for you will not abide my soul in death, you are removed to me.

The power of life divine, this shall I know at your right hand joy from your face will shine.

[ 41 : 31 ] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.