

# Go to the Place God has Prepared for You

Genesis 45:25 – 46:27

*Halifax: 22 January 2017, 10:30 AM*

## **Introduction:**

We live in a day, when, I am very sad to say, a lot of Christians have a very low view of the church.

- It is quite common to meet those who profess to trust in Christ, yet who see no need to be a member of a particular church.
- And it is the case with many churches, that being a member doesn't mean much of anything either.

Those who are members in such churches are not held accountable—the elders do not watch over the souls of those under their care as our Lord commands.

- Members in such churches can hold to doctrinal error or can live ungodly lives without ever being challenged and called to repentance.
  - They can go on from day to day until they die without ever realising that they do not really know Christ in a saving way.
  - If the truth were known, the ministers of these churches and many of the elders or priests or whatever they may be called will not inherit the kingdom of heaven either—just as it was in the day of Jesus.
- It is in part for this reason that so many have a low view of the church.
  - They are, in a sense, correct that there is little use for being in it—but it is our duty to find a church that is following God's word.
  - All through the Bible, there were false churches as there were in Jesus' day that did not even know the LORD.
    - Jesus Himself said that many of the sons of the kingdom would be cast out.

Another reason that many keep themselves away from the church because of their own rebellion.

- There are professing believers who do not want to be accountable (or in some cases cannot get along) with any particular body of faithful elders anywhere!
  - They do not want anybody holding them accountable.
  - "I will look after my own soul, thank you very much!" they say.

And yet another reason that people reject the church is because there are some branches of the church and particular congregations that have abused authority...

- In some cases imposing rules on the members that go beyond the Bible—whether it be the observance of man-made traditions like feast days or prohibitions such as no alcohol or no card playing or no meat on Fridays.
  - Besides this, some churches—in particular the Roman Catholic Church, have wrongly put themselves in the place of offering the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of the peoples' sins...
    - They have priests who claim to offer Christ as a sacrifice in the mass instead of preachers who proclaim that He was offered once for all for the remission of the sins of all who believe.

In this reaction against the visible church in our times, we have lost what all the churches of the reformation did not lose—the realisation that the church is pretty much essential for salvation.

- John Calvin expressed it like this in the opening of the fourth book of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:
  - “But as it is now our purpose to discourse of the visible church, let us learn, from her single title of Mother, how useful, nay, how necessary the knowledge of her is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceive us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourish us at her breasts, and, in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels. For our weakness does not permit us to leave the school until we have spent our whole lives as scholars” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.1.4).
- Our own Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of the church like this in chapter 25:
  - Section 2: The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.
  - Section 3: Unto this catholic visible church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and does, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.
- The other Reformed confessions have similar statements.
  - It has only been in our modern days of rugged individualism that so many people are content to profess to believe in Christ, and yet remain outside the church.
  - It was certainly not the case in the early church where the apostles were diligent to establish churches in every place the gospel was received, appointing elders to give oversight to the members (see Titus 1), and commanding the members to obey to those who watched for their souls (Heb 13:17)!
    - All who were baptised were added to the church, and if they went out, it was, as John the apostle said, “because they are not of us.”

Today, as we continue our sermon series in the book of Genesis, we are going to look at a passage that is related to this.

- We are going to see how Jacob and his family submit to God in going to the place that God appointed for them for their preservation and growth as His people.
  - We are going to see that when the Lord called them, through Joseph, to come to Egypt in a time of famine where they would be fed, they go.
- In the New Testament, our Lord Jesus calls us into His church where we receive Him as the bread of life for our souls.
  - As we just saw in our Confession, *unto this catholic visible church Christ has given the ministry [oversight], oracles [ministry of the word], and ordinances of God [sacraments, prayer, praise], for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and does, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.*

- The phrase, *making them effectual*, means that He causes them to work for our salvation and our preservation.
  - That is why without them, there is said to be *no ordinary possibility of salvation*.

My exhortation to you from this passage will be: *Go to the place prepared for you by the Lord for your sustenance*, just as Jacob and his household did.

- We have seen in previous sermons how they went to get bread in Egypt because they were starving in a severe famine.
  - Twice they went up to buy bread, and, to make a long story short, the second time they went they learned that their brother Joseph had been made the ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh.
  - And Joseph had told them that God had sent him to Egypt to provide for them in the famine so that they would not perish...
    - He told them that they must come to live in Egypt to live lest they die because there were yet five more years of famine.
- And what we see today is their obeying and their going down to the place that God has provided for them to eat bread...
  - We should see in this that we must obey God's call to go to the place He has appointed for us in this world to find Christ the bread of life...
    - And that place is the church—the visible church—where the gospel is preached and where the sacraments are administered and where oversight is provided and where Christ gathers and maintains His people for eternal life.
    - It is not for you to argue that you will be fine if you remain elsewhere when God has called you to enter the church.
      - Go to the place that God has prepared for you!

Please listen now as I read to you from our text—Genesis 45:25 – 46:27

**Gen 45:25– 46:17:** Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. <sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, “Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup> But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. <sup>28</sup> Then Israel said, “*It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.*” <sup>46:1</sup> So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup> Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>3</sup> So He said, “*I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down*

*to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. <sup>4</sup> I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.*” <sup>5</sup> Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. <sup>6</sup> So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. <sup>7</sup> His sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters and his sons’ daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt. <sup>8</sup> Now these *were* the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben *was* Jacob’s firstborn. <sup>9</sup> The sons of Reuben *were* Ha-noch, Pal-lu, Hez-ron, and Car-mi. <sup>10</sup> The sons of Simeon *were* Je-mu-

el, Ja-min, O-had, Ja-chin, Zo-har, and Sha-ul, the son of a Canaanite woman. <sup>11</sup> The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Ko-hath, and Me-ra-ri. <sup>12</sup> The sons of Judah *were* Er, Onan, She-lah, Perez, and Ze-rah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez *were* Hez-ron and Ha-mul. <sup>13</sup> The sons of Issachar *were* To-la, Pu-vah, Job, and Shim-ron. <sup>14</sup> The sons of Zebulun *were* Se-red, E-lon, and Jah-le-el. <sup>15</sup> These *were* the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, *were* thirty-three. <sup>16</sup> The sons of Gad *were* Ziph-i-on, Hag-gi, Shu-ni, Ez-bon, E-ri, Ar-o-di, and A-re-li. <sup>17</sup> The sons of Asher *were* Jim-nah, Ish-u-ah, Is-u-i, Be-ri-ah, and Se-rah, their sister. And the sons of Be-ri-ah *were* He-ber and Mal-chi-el. <sup>18</sup> These *were* the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons. <sup>19</sup> The sons

of Rachel, Jacob's wife, *were* Joseph and Benjamin. <sup>20</sup> And to Joseph in the land of Egypt *were* born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom As-e-nath, the daughter of Po-ti--Ph-e-rah priest of On, bore to him. <sup>21</sup> The sons of Benjamin *were* Be-lah, Be-cher, Ash-bel, Ge-ra, Naaman, E-hi, Rosh, Mup-pim, Hup-pim, and Ard. <sup>22</sup> These *were* the sons of Rachel, who *were* born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all. <sup>23</sup> The son of Dan *was* Hu-shim. <sup>24</sup> The sons of Naphtali *were* Jah-ze-el, Gu-ni, Je-zer, and Shil-lem. <sup>25</sup> These *were* the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all. <sup>26</sup> All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, *were* sixty-six persons in all. <sup>27</sup> And the sons of Joseph who *were* born to him in Egypt *were* two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt *were* seventy.

May the LORD richly bless the reading of His holy word.

What a blessing—seventy persons, reminding us of the seventy families at Babel that were separated...

- Here they are, now wonderfully united, and going to the place that God had prepared for them, until the time was fulfilled that they should return to Canaan.
- Egypt was to be something like an incubator where the fledgling nation would be kept until they were ready to conquer and inhabit Canaan.

God has a place for His people in every age.

- For Noah, it was the ark.
- For Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was Canaan.
- And now for the sons of Jacob, it was Egypt until the time appointed.
- Then it was Canaan.
- Then Babylon, and then back to Canaan again.
- And now that Jesus has come, it is the church which is found throughout the world.

That is the place God has provided for us to be nourished and sustained and where we are to powerfully advance with the gospel that subdues the nations.

- Let us turn to our text and see what we can learn about going to the place that God has prepared for His people.

**I. First of all, see how we are revived to go to the place when realise that our Saviour is alive and is calling for us to come and find bread in His house.**

A. Until this call came, Jacob was like a dead man.

1. It seemed to him that God had let him down.

- a. He thought his beloved son Joseph was dead—
    - and really, as he saw it, Joseph was the only son that Jacob trusted to lead his family into the future—and with good reason.
    - His other sons, except Benjamin who did not seem to have the strength of influence with his older brothers to lead, had let him down.
      - His oldest had committed incest with his stepmother.
      - The next two had shown themselves to be violent and rash men.
      - Judah had married a Canaanite and had seen God’s hand of judgement on two of his sons for their wickedness.
      - The others were divided or were sons of his concubines.
        - They had shown themselves to be untrustworthy over the years in many ways.
        - How could they possibly lead this family to which special promises of salvation had been made into the future?
  - b. And to add to all the troubles, Jacob’s family was starving in famine and forced to go to Egypt to buy bread.
    - And the ruler of Egypt was not friendly toward them and had been treating them with suspicion as spies—holding Simeon hostage and demanding that Benjamin come.
    - And the famine showed no signs of letting up.
2. Jacob was very discouraged by all of this and only saw his future as that of going down to Sheol in sorrow and despair.
- That is the condition he was in as his sons returned to him from Egypt.
    - He dreaded their return—what bad news would they bear this time?
    - He was much like the poor disciples of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, speaking of their lost hope now that Jesus had been crucified.
- B. But look at what happens to Jacob when they return (in verses 25-28)!
1. They come and they tell him that Joseph is still alive!
    - **Gen 45:25-26: Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. <sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.”**
    - a. What is the initial response of this old feeble man who is expecting the worst!
      - We are told at the end of verse 26 that his heart stood still because he did not believe them.
      - It was too good to be true—just as it was too good for the disciples to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.
      - All this time Jacob had thought Joseph was dead and now he is told that he lives—it was like his son had been resurrected.
    - b. But then Jacob believes when he hears the promise of Joseph and sees the carts.
      - 1) If you were here last week, perhaps you will remember that Joseph had sent carts from Egypt with a whole caravan of gifts!

- We compared these to the gift of the Holy Spirit that Christ gave to confirm to those to whom the apostles declared that He was alive that He was indeed alive.
    - The Holy Spirit initially gave signs and wonders to confirm the word of the apostles, and through the ages He has worked in the church to sustain her and bless her—
      - He is a down-payment of the fullness that is yet to come.
- 2) Along with this, Jacob heard the words of Joseph, calling him and his family to come to Egypt and live!
    - Promising to sustain them in that place.
  - 3) You can see the response of Jacob in verse 27—he revived:
    - Verse 27 says, **But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.**
    - His sons must have told him the truth—what else could explain these carts and these words and all of these other gifts?
2. Here you see that Jacob comes alive.
    - The announcement that Joseph is alive causes him to come alive.
      - The word *revived* is literally *lived*—
      - His spirit had been dead, but now his spirit lived because Joseph lived and he believed!
  3. And being alive, this old man is now ready get up and go with his whole household to the place that Joseph has provided!
    - His great desire is to see Joseph.
    - Knowing that he is alive is everything to him...as he says in verse 28:
      - **Then Israel said, “It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”**
      - He is like Simeon in the NT when he saw that Jesus had been born—“now I am ready to die, for I have seen your salvation!”
- C. This is what happens to everyone who believes that Jesus is alive!
1. There is no hope without Him.
    - We are dying people with no hope of life.
    - We try to get on as best we can, but we know that we will all die.
    - And if we have any true sense of our sin, we also know that there is a sentence of condemnation upon us.
  2. But how all this changes when we hear the good news that Jesus lives and that He is calling for us to enter His Father’s house—the kingdom of righteousness...
    - that He is the bread of life and that He will give us bread that we may live.
    - We realise that He went to the cross to bear our sins—
      - that they drove Him down into the deep judgment of God’s wrath and curse—all of the shame and all of the condemnation fell upon Him.
      - It brought even this mighty One down to the grave.

- But He lives because God has accepted His sacrifice!
  - He lives and He is calling for us to come that we might live through Him!
  - As soon as the wonderful news breaks in to our stony heart, our spirit comes alive to God and we rise up and follow Him.
    - We come to the place that He has told us—the place that he has provided where we can live and not die through His grace.
      - We are baptised and joined to the church, and there we remain.

## II. And I want you to see secondly how God confirms His covenant with us at the door to His house.

A. One of the best things about the true faith is the way the LORD clearly communicates to us where we stand with Him by way of covenant.

1. In false religion, it is often the case that the devotees have no idea what God thinks of them.

- They are left to wonder if they have done enough or perhaps they are left to go through endless cycles of reincarnation, never knowing when it will end.
- Even false versions of Christianity downplay the covenants and the finished work of Christ and leave worshippers wondering how long they will be in purgatory,
  - or resting in some slender ceremony of asking Jesus into their heart that they are not sure if they performed the way they should.

2. Here we see an example of how God meets His people at each stage of redemptive history to tell them where to go and what He will do with them there.

a. In this case with Jacob, He comes to him when Jacob is leading his family in worship at the border of the promised land of Canaan.

- He is offering sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.
- Speaking of God as the God of his father Isaac is a reminder that he is worshipping the God who made unchanging covenant promises to him and his fathers.
  - These covenants have not changed.

b. Yet at this time there is a change of location for the covenant people.

- For Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Canaan has been the place where God told them to dwell and where He promised to bless them and multiply them.
  - Jacob's clan of 70, all now following the Lord, testifies to God's faithfulness and to the completion of an era.
- And now the promise is that God will bless Jacob in Egypt.
  - The word *there* is very significant in verse 3 where the LORD says:
    - **“I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.”**
  - We remember how Abraham was called out of his homeland and told to dwell in Canaan, and that God would bless him there...
    - And we remember how he left Canaan without permission a couple of times and got into trouble,
    - And how Isaac was commanded to stay there,
    - And how Jacob was commanded to return after his time of going to Haran to find a wife.

- But now the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is over and Israel has emerged as a fledgling nation...
  - And the promise of God is that He will multiply the nation in Egypt and then bring them back.
- c. In every age, God’s people must listen to where He calls them to be and to what He calls them to do. As I pointed out earlier:
- For Noah, the place of blessing was the ark...
  - For Abraham Isaac, and Jacob, it was Canaan...
  - For Jacob’s sons, it was Egypt...
  - For the people in the day of Moses, it was Canaan...
  - And then it was Babylon where they were purged of their idolatry...
  - And then back to Canaan until Jesus came.
  - And now it is the church in every nation—the great assembly where the gospel is preached, discipline is exercised, and the ordinances of the gospel are faithful administered.
- B. Let’s take a look at what God promises to all who leave the place where they are to go to the place that God has appointed for blessing in every age.
1. First, we would note how He identifies Himself...
    - a. In verse 3 He first says, “I am God.”
      - The word is El, and speaks of Him as the Almighty—the one who can do whatever He pleases.
      - Jacob is keenly aware of that after seeing that Joseph is alive and has been connected with their clan to provide for them so that they will not perish in the famine.
        - He is the Almighty and He will fulfill all His promises.
    - b. Then the LORD goes on to say that He is the God of your father.
      - We already saw how this connects Him to the promises that were already made.
      - To this day, the true God is none other than the God who made promises to Adam and Eve, who renewed them to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then with Moses, then with David, then at Babylon, and who has now fulfilled them in Jesus Christ and is yet fulfilling them in Him.
        - God does not start over when He renews His promises and calls His people to a new place...
          - He is still the same God and is still building on the same promises.
          - That means that we can benefit today from what He says here.
    2. After identifying Himself, He next commands Jacob not to fear to go to Egypt.
      - This is what the LORD wants him to do.
      - a. He promises that it is *there* that He will make him (that is, his descendants) into a great nation.
        - It was not God’s plan for them to multiply in Canaan and gradually displace the Canaanites.



- God had already told Abraham that at a future time, the Canaanites, or the Amorites, would be judged—when their iniquity was full.
  - They would be left at peace for a while during which time Israel would be multiplying in Egypt.
  - Then Israel would emerge as a great people who were numerous enough to fill the entire land of Canaan and to destroy all of the wicked inhabitants who lived there.
  - We know that, but for Jacob, the present promise is that in Egypt his descendants will become a great nation.
- b. And the reason that Jacob ought not to fear is because the Almighty God promises to go with him to Egypt.
- Just as God promised to go with Abraham when he went to Canaan, so now He was promising to be with fledgling Israel when they went to Egypt.
  - They would be preserved and blessed and multiplied and prepared for the next phase in God’s great plan.
  - In the future the LORD will promise to be with Moses, then with Joshua when the time comes to enter Canaan...
- c. It is good for us to remember that our Lord Jesus promised to be with us until the end of this present age.
- He said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
  - He said that to His disciples as He told them to go into the nations and build His church—
    - to gather disciples, by baptising them and by teaching them to observe all things that He had commanded them.
    - People were to enter in to the church of Jesus Christ to be forgiven and blessed with eternal life as God’s people.
      - We have no reason to fear, only to believe and obey His call.
  - We are to come to the place where the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed and where Jesus has bread for us to sustain us.
    - Where He was crucified for our sins is proclaimed and where we, in this age, go to the nations to make disciples.
    - We do not need to fear because He is with us.
3. And you see that the LORD also promises that His present call to Egypt is but a preparation for the next phase of His redemptive plan.
- a. He promises in verse 4 not only that He will go down to Egypt with Jacob and his clan, but also that He will surely bring them up again—
- that is, back to Canaan.
- b. So for us, there is held out to us the promise that at the end of this age, the church will be called to meet Christ in the clouds...
- That we will go to greet Him in the air when He returns to establish His kingdom of glory upon the earth and to drive out the wicked.

- He will come and we will come with Him and we will reign with Him forever in the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness dwells.
    - We will be with the Father and with the Son forever.
  - This age is not the end, just as Egypt was by no means the final destiny for Jacob.
    - The promise then as now was that all the nations would be blessed in the seed of the woman that they would bring forth.
    - It is the promise of a city whose builder and maker is God!
  - He is preparing us for glory.
  - In Ephesians 5, we are told that **Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**
    - And in Revelation 21, we are told that we will be presented as a bride adorned for her husband when Jesus returns.
      - We are in the church to which we have been called, being prepared for that great day by Jesus.
4. And finally God promises Jacob that he himself will die in hope.
- Jacob had not yet seen Joseph, so this is a very vivid encouraging promise...
    - that Joseph will put his hand on your eyes—the idea is that he will close his eyes when he dies.
    - Jacob would be with the son who was appointed to lead his household into the future gracious plan of God when he died.
      - Jacob would die, knowing that his house was in good hands—in the hands of the one God had raised up to lead his family at this time.
      - He would be confident that God was carrying forward His plan of redemption into the future and would perfect all that concerned him and his household.
  - Of course for us, we have the risen reigning Lord Jesus who is the head of the church...
    - And we die in Him, resting in the certainty that He will bring to pass all the God has promised to His people.
      - We have complete trust in Him as the One that God has ultimately raised up to be our Saviour.
      - He will see that the church is nurtured and fed and kept until all is fulfilled—and we die in hope that all is well in His hands.
      - There is no uncertainty in our death—He Himself—the one that God raised from the dead—closes our eyes.

TRANS> So brothers and sisters, just as Jacob was called to go to Egypt, so in this age we are called to come to the visible church.

- Egypt was the place for Israel in the time of Joseph where God provided for them, and the church of Jesus Christ is the place where He provides for us and sustains us.

### III. So see to it that you do what Jacob did—go the place that God has appointed for you!

A. There is nothing at all complicated here.

1. Jacob goes to the place that God has appointed for him and his house.

- Verses 5-7 sum it all up quite nicely for us.

- **Gen 46:5-7: Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. <sup>6</sup> So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. <sup>7</sup> His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.**

2. The rest of the chapter spells out the names of those who went with Jacob.

- And the great blessing is that there are no Esaus or Ishmaels among Jacob's sons who go elsewhere.

- All twelve of his sons and his daughter Dinah and all their children go to Egypt with their father Jacob.

- The total number is seventy, as we are told, in verse 26 and 27.

- The number of completeness—not one is missing as Jesus says—that all whom the Father has given Him will come to Him and not one will be lost.

- We have seen clearly, with Jacob's sons, that they are not there because of their own goodness...

- God has worked wonders to unify them—and that is exactly what He does for all who are in the church.

- Not one of us would be there if God had not worked wonders.

- He is the one who writes His law in our hearts and who brings us to repentance and faith.

- They all came—they are all united to Joseph.

B. And I say to you that all of you must come to the church that God has appointed in this age and be united to Christ as your Saviour.

1. Jesus has established the visible church—a living body of the redeemed that He nurtures, protects, multiplies, and provides for.

- In Ephesians 2:19-22, it says: **“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

- He promises that He will build her and that the gates of Hades will not be able to prevail against her.

- She will advance and she will be unstoppable.

2. See that none of you remains in the world when He has called you to repent and be baptised into the church (which is His body) in His name.

- a. It is true that we cannot see who is sincere and who is not—and that there will be sons of the kingdom in the visible church who will be cast out.
    - Jesus teaches us this in the parables in Matthew 13...many will profess and come among us who are not truly of us...
      - There will be wheat and tares, there will be all kinds of fish in the net, both good and bad—
  - b. But He does not speak of any class of believers who does not outwardly unite with His people—who are not in the net.
    - True believers will come to Him, and the outward form of coming to Him in this age is uniting with the church.
    - As we read in Ephesians, it is a body in which there are Jews and Gentiles who are united—not just idealistically, but literally.
  - c. It is a visible institution with elders who watch over the members and an assembly with ordinances of worship and the preaching of the Word as is described in 1 Timothy.
    - With membership so that persons are received and put out by the officers that God has appointed.
    - It is not a secret society, but one into which we openly enter by confession of faith and by the sign of baptism.
      - Those who are in the church, we are to judge, and those who are outside, God will judge.
  - d. I say all of this because we live in times when so many people want to define the church as an idealistic invisible entity that has no visible expression on earth.
    - That flies in the face of all that we see in the New Testament, where the apostles write to the assembly in this place and in that place,
      - where they speak of persons being brought in and persons being put out,
      - where officers are ordained and where ordinances are practiced.
3. You must go to her because this is the place where God calls His people today.
    - To remain in Canaan when He calls you to Egypt is to be left to die in the famine without bread.
    - So to remain in the world when He calls you to enter the church is to be left to starve in the wilderness without the bread that Christ has provided for you.
    - He is our Saviour...come and meet Him at His house.
      - He will feed you and you will never hunger and never thirst.
        - **The Bible tells us that Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**
    - If that is what Christ does for the church, surely that is where you want to be.