

The Place God Has Prepared for You

Genesis 46:28 – 47:12

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Introduction:

Last week, I spoke to you about how God (through Joseph) called Jacob to come to the place that He had prepared for him and his household to grow.

- Oddly enough, it was not to the Promised Land of Canaan, but to Egypt.
- Egypt was not be the final resting place for them, but God make it clear to Jacob that they were to go there for a time, and that it would be *there* that He would multiply them into a great nation.
- And so they went.

And if you were here last week, you will remember that I applied this to you by telling you that you are to go to the place that God has provided for you today.

- And now that Jesus has come, that place is the church—the visible church where the true gospel is preached and discipline is exercised in your community.
- It is *there* that Christ has promised to provide for you and your household.
- It is *there* that you are to go and put yourself under the care of those that God has appointed to oversee His church.
- It is *there* that He will provide for you and cause you to multiply in order to prepare you (and all of us together in the worldwide church) for glory.

Today we are going to look further at the place that God has prepared for His people.

- We have come to Genesis 46:28 where Jacob and his family arrive at the place God (though Joseph) has prepared for them in Egypt.
- As we reflect on what God provided for them through Joseph their mediator, we will reflect on what He has provided for us through Jesus our Mediator.
- And once again, as we reflect on what God provided for them, we (through Jesus) has prepared for us as His people at this present time.
- Our reading will take us from Genesis 46:28 to Genesis 47:12.
- Please give careful attention to it, because it is God’s holy Word.

Genesis 46:28 – 47:12: Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him *the way* to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. ²⁹ So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰ And Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you *are* still alive.” ³¹ Then 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 those of my father’s house, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³² And the men *are* shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.’ ³³ So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ ³⁴ that you shall say, ‘Your servants’ occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we *and* also our fathers,’ that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an abomination to the

Egyptians.” 47:1 Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, “My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they *are* in the land of Goshen.” 2 And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. 3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What *is* your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants *are* shepherds, both we *and* also our fathers.” 4 And they said to Pharaoh, “We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine *is* severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” 5 Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 The land of Egypt *is* before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land

of Goshen. And if you know *any* competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.” 7 Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How old *are* you?” 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” 10 So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. 11 And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with bread, according to the number in *their* families.

May the LORD bless the reading of His holy Word.

In this reading, we see what Jacob and his family found when they got to Egypt.

- They obeyed God’s call to come to the place that He had prepared for them there, and of course they found everything they needed for that time in their history.
- Remember that they were the family God had promised to take care of and multiply into a great nation that would eventually bring His salvation to the nations.
 - He had told Abraham that He would bless him and make him a great nation and that in his seed, all the families (or the nations) of the earth would be blessed.
 - This guaranteed this family that God would preserve them until that promise was fulfilled.
- And now that Jesus has come, the nations have been blessed with the salvation that God promised to bring forth from one particular male descendant of this family...
 - And of course that male descendant is our Lord Jesus Christ who brought salvation into this lost and condemned world.
- He established a kingdom of righteousness here, a kingdom where there is complete restoration to God’s favour through faith in Jesus and what He did.
 - And what He did, when He, the Son of God, came into this world, was to provide for this kingdom of righteousness an atonement by the shedding of His blood for all who are appointed to believe and enter His kingdom...
 - And he provided a life in behalf of all of us that is fully acceptable to God—His own perfect obedience as the one that represents us.
 - And He also gives to us His Holy Spirit so that we will see our need for this kingdom, desire this kingdom, and come to live in it forever.

- Like Jacob and his family, we hear His call and we come.
 - We believe, and our faith is expressed by entering into the kingdom as it appears in this world—in the church which He has established—which is also called the house and family of God.
 - We and our children enter by baptism when we confess our faith and obedience to Him, and we live in the body of His people in the local community and submit to those He has placed over us as His ministers to watch for our souls.
 - The church is the place that He has prepared for us in this world at this time.

And today as we look to see how God provided for Jacob and his family in Egypt in the place He provided for them,

- we will consider how He has provided for us in the church today.

TRANS> And the first thing I want you to see is that:

I. God's appointed mediator for his people has authority to do whatever he wants and he is our brother who is totally for us.

- How glad we should be to think that our Mediator is like Joseph is here in our text!
- A. Even though he is lord of all, he is not ashamed to own us as his brothers.
 1. Just as Joseph occupied a seat at the right hand of the most powerful ruler in the world,
 - so our Lord Jesus occupies the highest throne in the universe, for He is exalted to sit at the right hand of God the Father.
 - Not just as the Son of God—He was always equal to the Father as the Son of God.
 - But now as our Mediator, our own flesh and blood, He has gone to sit on that exalted throne where He made head over all things for the sake of the church.
 2. Joseph did not hesitate to tell Pharaoh that this family of shepherds were his brothers.
 - We have already seen that.
 - Even though shepherds were, as Joseph reminds us in this chapter, *an abomination to the Egyptians...*
 - probably because the Egyptians were city folks who enjoyed the refinements of the arts and other city pleasures.
 - Shepherds handle dirty animals all day and they are wanderers—often they were not trusted to be honest men.
 - Yet, this did not stop Joseph from fully owning them.
 - In Hebrews 2 we are told that Jesus, though we are sinners and though He has been accepted at God's right hand,
 - is not ashamed to call us His brothers—He has sanctified by His blood and has made us acceptable in that way—and we are acceptable now!
 - This is very comforting.

TRANS> But not only is he unashamed to call them his brothers...

- B. He is also very welcoming of them as his brothers. See how he delights in them!

1. You can almost feel Joseph's warm affection in verse 29.
 - a. It speaks of how he makes his chariot ready—a detail that is given to bring out his enthusiasm.
 - This man with all his important duties goes out to meet his father at once and presents himself to him.
 - The word *present* is elsewhere used of the Lord presenting himself to the patriarchs in Genesis.
 - b. And then look at what Joseph does at the end of verse 29: **he...fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.**
 - It had been 22 long years—Jacob had thought Joseph to be dead, and Joseph has wondered if his old father was alive...
 - But now they are embracing and embracing and Joseph is so glad to see him that he can't stop weeping.
 - What a warm greeting he gives his father.
 - c. And what satisfaction his father has to see him—verse 30:
 - **And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."**
 - Before, Jacob had thought that he would go down to his grave in sorrow, but now he is ready to depart as a satisfied man!
 - The son he had trusted to manage the home when he was gone is still alive...the son he so dearly loves is still alive.
 - His spirit came alive last week when he believed that Joseph was still alive, but now he has seen him and been received by him.
2. Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus has the same warm affection for us.
 - a. He greets us warmly when we come to His house.
 - He is our bridegroom and He is preparing us to be presented to Him glory.
 - Remember how He met us when we first came to His house—surrounded by rejoicing angels whenever one sinner repents (Luke 15:7)?
 - And how it says that though we baptise with water, He baptises us with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16)?
 - He welcomes us to His house with the comfort of the symbol of cleansing and regeneration.
 - He takes our filthy garments and clothes us with His righteousness.
 - Even of our children He says, "Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Luke 18:16)
 - And remember how He spoke in Luke 22:15 when He instituted the Lord's Supper and said, **with fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer?**
 - How He delights to come to us spiritually now and to meet us at the table and to commune with us and bless us.
 - And how often does He meet with us through His word—He comes to us with His encouragement—His comfort—His rebuke—whatever we need—because He delights in us.

- b. We have yet to meet Him face to face it is true,
 - but what a joy it is to know that whenever we come to worship Him,
 - He is there in the midst of us, delighting in us with tears of joy and gladness—even as the one who has saved us.
 - How precious we are to Him.
 - Never ever hesitate to come to Him if it is your desire to live for Him and to live for God and to be forgiven.
 - He is a welcoming saviour to all who come as broken sinners, no matter what you may have done.
 - It is the proud that He does not receive—
 - He will never turn you away if you come to Him to save you.
- c. Just as it was deeply satisfying to Jacob to meet Joseph, so it is deeply satisfying to us to meet an affectionate Lord Jesus Christ.
 - There is nothing more we need to know than of His acceptance!
 - If we have that, we have all that we need...

C. Indeed, what security we have in our mediator's promise to provide for us!

1. Jacob knew that Joseph connected him to Pharaoh.
 - His own flesh and blood had audience with Pharaoh and would not be despised.
 - Jacob and his family were dependant on Egypt at this time to sustain them in the famine—to provide land for them and bread for them—and to offer them protection.
 - And Joseph had all the influence that he needed to go between his brothers and Pharaoh.
 - In verse 31 he assures them that he will go to Pharaoh to obtain all that they need in the land of Egypt...
 - **Then 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 those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.'"**
2. That is what is so wonderful about our Lord Jesus.
 - He has come in our flesh—though He is the Son of God, He became a human being for us.
 - He did not cease to be God, but He became flesh in Mary's womb and was born of her with a human body and soul.
 - He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.
 - He has been made head over all things for the sake of the church.

TRANS> The point is, He can obtain whatever He wants for us.

- And He wants what is best for us—the very best for us as church at this time in this place.
- That means that we can be we sure that...

II. The place our mediator provides for us is the very best place for us.

- He could give us anything, and because He loves us, He has given to His church in every place exactly what we need.

- Let's look at the place that He has given to us.
- A. First, it is a place where we are able to provide, but are also provided for.
1. Joseph does not give his brothers cushy jobs in Egypt.
 - He does not secure some cabinet position or some high office for them.
 - He had the authority to appoint them to such places...
 - But instead he gives them a good piece of land in Goshen where they can continue in their work as shepherds and cowboys.
 - He provides for them, but in such a way that they are able to provide for themselves.
 2. Sometimes, knowing the authority of Jesus, we might wonder why He does not give us as His church a higher status in this world.
 - **1 Cor 1:26: For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**
 - a. Couldn't we have a greater influence if we were given the seats of power and authority?
 - Wouldn't people be more inclined to accept the gospel if the church was more honourable and respectable in the world?
 - Surely the Lord would do it if He wanted to—because as we have seen, He is head over all things...
 - But instead we see that there are not many mighty and not many noble that enter His kingdom—and some of us who once were lose our status when we follow Christ.
 - The science professor loses his position when it is found out that he believes that God made the world in six days...
 - b. Perhaps we could have a greater following if we were more honourable.
 - But do you really think we could handle it?
 - We have enough trouble about trusting in ourselves to begin with—we forget that it is not by our wisdom and power but by God's Spirit that the kingdom goes forth.
 - Those who are the most clever or the most honourable are the ones who are the most likely to forget this.
 - By keeping us in the lowly place, we are much more able to remember that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us....
 - That when we are weak, it is then that we are strong.
 - That prayer is the thing that is most needed to bring in the kingdom—the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.
 - **1 Cor 1:27-29: God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

- c. Like Joseph's brothers, we are in a place where we have to labour...
 - We don't have unlimited finances for our mission work, for training up ministers, for sending them where we want.
 - We have to labour and sacrifice.
 - And we don't have control of the corridors of power among the nations so that we can punish wrongs and enforce God's laws.
 - As God's people, there are callings that we cannot enter into without compromising our faith.
- B. Related to this, we see that the place God provides for us is also a place that is in the world, but still separate from it.
1. See the wisdom of Joseph in setting up his brothers in the land of Goshen as shepherds.
 - a. Here they were protected under the wing of Egypt—Pharaoh even made them officers over his herds and flocks...
 - But Joseph knowingly gave them this portion in Egypt that was on the outskirts of Egypt—in a place that the Egyptians did not want to go...
 - doing work that made them an abomination to the Egyptians.
 - It is clear in our text that Joseph did this deliberately.
 - b. Can you see how wise this was?
 - It was God's will for them to remain as a separate nation—for them to multiply as an independent nation.
 - If they had been given a place in Egypt, they would have begun to mingle with the Egyptians and to learn their ways.
 - They would have intermarried with them.
 - They were too small and too weak to not become completely absorbed by Egypt if God had not provided for them to be kept separate.
 - Joseph could have given them those positions, but he deliberately chose not to.
2. So it is for us.
 - a. When we follow the Lord, there are things in the world—positions and such—that we are kept out of.
 - Observing the Christian Sabbath keeps us out of professional (and many amateur) sports—and out of Hollywood and out of the highest places in music and arts and even politics.
 - And today we are even kept from certain types of medicine where we would be forced to perform abortions or administer lethal injections.
 - b. Sometimes we lament these things and even feel that we ought to compromise so we can have more influence in the world.
 - But instead, we should trust the Lord, knowing that it is not to harm us that He keeps us out of these things, but for our own good and for the good of His kingdom.
 - He has given us plenty to do in the world, and we should be thankful for our inheritance in Goshen.

- c. Maybe you'd like to be more popular or more beautiful or more successful than you are...
 - Don't sweat it.
 - God has made you what you are.
 - I am sure that if I had been more popular or more successful than I have been, it would have done me a lot of harm.
 - I couldn't see that twenty years ago, but I can see it now.
 - Remember how God gave Israel what they craved in the wilderness, but sent leanness to their souls.
 - If you pester Him enough, He might give you more than Goshen, but is that really what is best for you?
 - Be thankful for what God has given you and make the most of it.
 - If He has put you in Goshen, then grow and multiply there.
- C. The place God has given us is the place that is the most suited to our growth as God's people,
- to your growth personally and to the growth of the whole worldwide church.
1. God's purpose for Israel in Egypt was not to win the Egyptians, but to multiply into a great nation.
 - That is what God told Jacob when He told him not to be afraid to go there.
 - **Gen 46:3: 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."**
 - He did not tell him that he would lead the Egyptians to repentance, but that He would multiply Israel into a great nation...
 - And that is exactly what God did—the conditions He gave them were just right for that purpose...
 - At first, they had the favour of Pharaoh when they needed bread in the famine and when they needed protection—and they grew.
 - But then after they increased, they needed affliction—and even though they were afflicted, they grew.
 - That is often how God works—that the more we are persecuted the more we grow.
 2. And for us, God has had a purpose for His church in the west—and it has not been our multiplication in number!
 - It has rather been a diminishing of our number.
 - God has made the attraction of the world very strong to us—but why?
 - It is to draw away the multitudes within the church that are not true—that are false Christians—unbelievers who are members.
 - God is purging us because we need to be purged.
 - He always gives us what is best for us.
 - We need to be sure that we are trusting Him and that we are counted with the remnant according to election.
 - Be sure that you are not one of the ones that are drawn off to destruction!

- God did this in Israel after the glory days of Solomon.
 - He began to send enemies and to divide the glorious kingdom that he had raised up—to purge it.
 - Eventually, they were wiped out and carried to Babylon, but God preserved a remnant according to election.
 - And years later when Christ came, He purged His people again so that the false ones rejected the Messiah...
 - Those who were of the truth, went out with Christ, as we read in Hebrews 13, bearing His reproach.
 - And it was through this that they multiplied among the Greeks and the Romans and the Africans...
 - Until days of purging were needed among these.
3. The point is that the Lord knows exactly what He is doing and we need to trust Him with the means that He has appointed for us where we are.
- a. We are to labour to win souls, but we are not to pervert His worship or to pervert the message or to twist His commandments in our efforts to win them.
 - We are to be faithful and leave the results to Him.
 - If it leads to slow growth or if it leads to diminished numbers or if it leads to much growth, we are to keep on doing what He has called us to do and leave it to Him to work out His purpose.
 - He has put us in the place we are meant to be for the long term health of His church, and it is our place to trust Him whether He has us in Goshen, Canaan, or Babylon,
 - In times of great prosperity like David and Solomon were in,
 - or times of great declension like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Elijah and Jesus Himself were in.
 - We are in His wise hands and He knows what is best—He has us in just the place that we need to be.
 - b. And note well—Goshen was a good land—
 - It was not the glory of Egypt—but it was the best of the land for flocks and herds...
 - **Gen 47:6: “The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen.”**
 - It was not good for farming and it was not a luxurious city, but it was the best land for flocks and herds.
 - It was their inheritance and it was good. It is just what they needed.

TRANS> And now I want to move on to our third point—namely that...

III. Though it may not always look like it, we actually have the best portion of all!

A. If one were to ask who had the better portion—Jacob or Pharaoh—

1. Most people would say that Pharaoh had the better part.
 - a. He was the most powerful man in the whole world.
 - It was a famine, but he was postured to prosper in it because of Joseph and the prophecies and wisdom that God had given Joseph.
 - He had riches and servants pouring into his kingdom.
 - b. Jacob, on the other hand, was practically reduced to the status of a beggar before Pharaoh.
 - His family did not have bread during the famine.
 - It was a seven year famine, and even though it was only two years into it, they were already starving.
 - Here they had had to come to Egypt that they might have bread to eat.
2. When Jacob meets Pharaoh, he testifies of how little he has had in this world.
 - When Pharaoh asks him how old he is, he replies with these telling words in verse 9:
 - **“The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.”**
 - a. Notice that he refers to his life as a pilgrimage.
 - Unlike Pharaoh who has a fixed place in a mighty kingdom, Jacob confesses that he and his fathers are but pilgrims.
 - Hebrews 11 draws attention to this in verse 13, when it says that the Patriarchs confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.
 - b. And notice as well that in contrast to Pharaoh who has enjoyed the finer things of life,
 - Jacob confesses that his days have been few and evil.
 - Though he had lived for years, he has not done very much.
 - He had all the unhappy years of childhood feeling the rejection of his father, then the years of servitude with Laban...and then the treacherous years that ended in disaster in Shechem...
 - And now these past 22 years, he has been lamenting the condition of his family and the loss of Joseph, and for the past two years, he has borne the anxieties brought on by the famine.

TRANS> It is pretty obvious that Pharaoh is in the superior place in the world.

B. But there is something remarkable that occurs in this meeting between Jacob and Pharaoh. *Jacob blesses Pharaoh!*

1. It is mentioned twice for emphasis in this short paragraph about their meeting.
 - In verse 7 it says: **Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.**
 - And at the end of the meeting in verse 10 it says: **So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.**

2. This is significant because, as Hebrews 7:7 teaches us, the one who is greater blesses the one who lesser...
 - Heb 7:7 says: **Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.**
 - So this indicates that Jacob is Pharaoh's superior here!
 - Notice as well that Jacob does not refer to himself the way one would usually speak to a great Pharaoh as "your servant."
 - And notice that Pharaoh raises no objection to any of this—he seems to gladly accept the blessing of Jacob.
 3. This is showing us that even though Pharaoh was now providing bread for Jacob to keep him and his family alive,
 - a. Jacob was had the superior portion!
 - Jacob had the promise of God Almighty that from his seed would come the seed of the woman that would bless all the nations.
 - Yes, Pharaoh had something that Jacob needed, but Jacob had what Pharaoh needed far more!
 - What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?
 - b. I quoted the verse before from Hebrews 11:13 about the patriarchs confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims, but I only quoted the last part of the verse.
 - The first part explains what is going on here:
 - It says of the patriarchs that: **These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**
 - Jacob has the promise of eternal life, and the promise of an eternal inheritance, a city whose Builder and Maker is God!
 - He had the promise of God's righteous kingdom that was going to come into the world through his seed.
 - c. And this Pharaoh—this Pharaoh who had received prophecy from Joseph and had believed—
 - This Pharaoh who knew Joseph—seems to recognise that Jacob has the superior inheritance to Egypt.
 - And he accepts the blessing from the wrinkled frail old man!
- C. Now this brings us to a very important question for each one of you to answer.
- Do you recognise where the blessing is?
1. It is not in your success or even your happiness in this world.
 - You have been given what you need, and you are to use it with a grateful heart to carry out God's calling.
 - It is good—the land of Goshen is good but it is not glorious.
 - It is not that what you do in this world does not matter—you are to obey the Lord and do what He has called you to do here.

2. But the blessing of the LORD is to be found in the promises of God in Christ.
 - You are to cherish the inheritance you have in His kingdom.
 - As we saw before, whether the kingdom is in Goshen or in Canaan; in the glory days of Solomon or the suffering days of Christ...
 - you are to find your portion here in Jesus Christ who came to save you from your sins—to secure your pardon and to deliver you from their power that you might serve God.
 - Are you all worried about your clothes and your body and your image and your success and your achievements and your honour and your riches?
 - Then you have chosen what is inferior!
 - The real treasure is in heaven.
 - Learn from this Pharaoh that the blessing is not to be found in kingdom of Egypt but in the kingdom of Christ—as weak and despised and as contemptible as it may be in this world.
 - Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you!
3. God will give you what you need now...
 - Verses 11 & 12 reinforce that...
 - **Genesis 47:11-12: And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹² Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.**
 - Be thankful for the provision of God in this world...but know that the superior portion is yet to come.
 - God has prepared a place for you in Egypt, and it is a good place where you can grow and serve Him.
 - But don't set your heart on the glory of Egypt when there are much greater blessings to be found.
 - Choose godliness rather than worldliness.
 - Choose the superior portion by gladly receiving the place God has provided for you today, not as an end, but as a means to glory.