

# Jacob's Death—A Powerful Exhibition of Hope

Genesis 49:29 – 50:14

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## **Introduction:**

As we approach the end of Genesis today in our Genesis sermon series, we have an account of Jacob's death.

It is very encouraging to see how the LORD has worked in this man's life and brought him to spiritual maturity.

- His example is especially useful because, although from his youth he has understood the supreme importance of having God's blessing,
  - we have seen a lot of weakness in his character and sin in his walk.
  - In many ways, his brother Esau is a more attractive person, more warm, more straightforward,
    - while Jacob has been a deceiver and a twister...
    - His weakness has been to manipulate and rarely to stand up for what is right or to confront anyone or speak to them directly.
- We saw this in the way he dealt with his father when, instead of confronting him about the birthright, he and his mother Rebekah obtained the birthright by deception, leaving his brother Esau angry enough to kill him...
  - We saw it with his running away from Esau at this point...
  - We have seen it with Laban—instead of standing up to him, he accepts Laban's insistence that he marry both Leah and Rachel,
  - And then we saw how instead of leading his wives in godliness, he played them off each other and gave into them when they suggested he take their maidservants as additional wives in their competition to have more children,
  - And when he finally departs from Laban, he does it secretly,
  - And when he comes back to Canaan, he piddles around and does not go on to Bethel and ends up letting his daughter mingle with the Canaanites,
  - And then as his sons grow up, he plays them off each other, showing favouritism to Joseph, and at the same time not correcting his other sons, with the result that his family is dreadfully divided...and even wicked—except for Joseph.
  - And then when he loses Joseph, he sinks into deep despair.

But all along the way, we have also seen how God graciously breaks into his life!

- He meets Him when he flees from Esau at Bethel, confirming the covenant He had made with his fathers—promising to bring him back safely and to bring forth his promised salvation of the world through him...
- And the Lord meets him again at Padan Aram, telling him that it is time for him to return to Canaan...
- And then again the Lord comes to rescue him when he flees from Laban and Laban catches up to him...
- And then there is the great encounter at Peniel when Jacob is about to meet Esau who may still be hostile toward him.

- This is the place where Jacob wrestles with the LORD and prevails so that his name is changed to Israel...
- Jacob here realised like never before that he must have God's blessing and grace or all is lost.
- And the Lord meets with him and renews the covenant again when Jacob finally returns to Bethel and worships the LORD as he had been commanded.
- And then years later, the LORD meets with Jacob when he sets out for Egypt, assuring him that this is His plan for his family, and that he will indeed see Joseph there.

And now in our text,

- we have him on his deathbed after 17 years in Egypt.
- He has just called his sons to him and he has blessed them, and then he dies peacefully and taken by his sons to Canaan by a great procession from Egypt to be buried with his fathers.

The grace of God has brought this man from a vacillating, weak, manipulator to a man of solid and mature faith, trusting fully in the Lord at his death.

- What a wonderful example of how God works in us despite our weakness!
  - Jacob's whole life has been a testimony of God's powerful grace that has kept him and that has taught him and completed him.
  - What hope it gives to all of us who are trusting in the Lord today!
    - Despite our weakness and sin, God's grace will prevail.
- Let us turn this death-bed account of Jacob for hope and encouragement.
  - Our scripture reading begins at Genesis 49:28, and ends with chapter 50, v. 14.
  - Give attention now as I read to you from God's holy Word.

**Genesis 49:28 – 50:14:** All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this *is* what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing. <sup>29</sup> Then he charged them and said to them: “I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup> in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. <sup>31</sup> There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. <sup>32</sup> The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth.” <sup>33</sup> And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people. <sup>50:1</sup> Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed

him. <sup>2</sup> And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. <sup>3</sup> Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. <sup>4</sup> And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup> ‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.’ ” <sup>6</sup> And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.” <sup>7</sup> So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup> as well as all the house of Joseph,

his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering. <sup>10</sup> Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. <sup>11</sup> And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This

*is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which *is* beyond the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. <sup>13</sup> For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. <sup>14</sup> And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

May the Lord bless to us the hearing of His holy Word.

- And may He encourage us as we consider how these words apply to us through the preaching of the Word.

**I. It is very clear in our text that Jacob dies in hope.**

- **What a splendid thing it would be if all of you are able to die with the same hope that Jacob had!**
- A. First, that you would die with the hope of Jacob that the church will continue to prosper and be blessed after you are gone.
  1. Jacob had gone from despair to hope about this!
    - a. We saw how he had despaired when he thought that Joseph had died.
      - He had declared that he would surely go down to Sheol in sorrow.
      - His other sons were ungodly and Joseph was gone—he could see no hope for the future of his family.
    - Over twenty years later when Joseph's brothers returned from Egypt the first time with word that they must take Benjamin if they return,
      - Jacob was still in a mode of despair, expecting to die in sorrow.
    - b. But now here he is on his deathbed after being in Egypt for 17 years,
      - having seen Joseph and how Joseph had been put there to provide bread and safety for his household in Egypt...
      - having seen how his family had been united again under Joseph...
      - and now having been given oracles of blessing from God for all of his sons, as verse 28 says of all twelve sons, **And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.**
        - Jacob's hope has been restored!
    - c. God had told him and his fathers that He would bless them and that through their seed would come the One who would bless all the families of the earth...
      - And now Jacob, who had doubted, is assured that it will be so!
  - What an encouragement for this man to die with a sure blessing on his lips for his sons.
    - How remarkably the Lord had pulled everything together!
    - Now Jacob is confident that the future of the church is in God's hands.

2. Pray that you will be able to die in this hope too...
  - a. That no matter what condition the church is in, that you will be firm in the promise of Jesus that He will build His church and that the gates of Hades will not be able to stand against it!
    - Jesus will reign until all His enemies are brought under His feet.
    - The church may be brought very low under the chastening hand of the Lord, but she will never perish until she is complete—
      - And then the glory that has been promised to her will be given to her.
  - b. And pray also that like Jacob, at your death you might be able to see your children and your children's children destined for the blessing of God
    - We do not have an unconditional promise about our children as we do about the church as a whole,
      - but this is something you ought to plead for before the LORD with earnest persevering prayer—
      - And what a blessing it is if you can die in hope that your posterity will follow you to glory through Christ.

TRANS> What a wonderful thing it would be to have this hope at death that God will complete His work and the church and do all that He has promised.

- But this is not the only hope I hope you will share with Jacob!

B. Second, that you would die with the hope that you will be gathered to your people.

1. In verse 29, Jacob says, **“I am to be gathered to my people.”**
  - a. He is sure of it.
    - Jacob believed that he would go to be with his fathers who had died in the Lord before him.
    - This was a hope that seems to have been generally understood in the ancient world—
      - coming down from Noah who was the father of them all, but being perverted over the years and in some cases lost by idolatry and unbelief.
      - But Jacob is confident in this hope.
  - b. He knew that death was not the end—
    - that he was only departing from this present world and from his sons to be with his fathers who had gone before him.
2. Your hope is even better if you are in Christ—
  - a. Not only will you be gathered to your people, but now that Christ has come, we are told that we will depart to be with Him!
    - When Jacob died, Christ had not yet come in our flesh and so had not ascended into heaven.
    - But now that He has gone there, the great expectation that we have is not only to see the saints that have gone before us...
      - but that we will go to be with Jesus!
  - b. If you are trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation, you can die with this wonderful expectation that you will see Him!
    - The focus is not on what you are leaving behind, but on Him to whom you are going—
      - You are the one who is gathered to your people, and those you leave behind are ones who are still separated until their death comes.

- C. The third way to be like Jacob when you die is to die in the hope that you will be resurrected to inherit the earth.
1. Burial is a testimony of this hope that our bodies will be raised up.
    - a. The ancient world buried their dead in this hope.
      - It became the custom of the ancient world and continued even among many who no longer believed in the resurrection.
      - We see clear testimony in the book of Job of the hope of the resurrection, for he said: **Job 19:26: And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God,**
    - b. You see here that on his deathbed, Jacob asks his sons to bury him...
      - 1) He says, “Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in in the field of Ephron the Hittite.”
        - He goes into specific detail, reminding his sons about the location of this particular burial site that Abraham had purchased.
        - You will remember that he had formerly made Joseph swear that he would bury him in this place.
      - 2) And there was a reason that this was so important to him.
        - Not only did he wish to be buried in hope of the resurrection, but to be buried in Canaan because this was the land that God had promised to him and his fathers...
          - A land that not only would be given to their descendants in the future, but also a land that they would personally receive in the resurrection.
2. And now we have the promise fully given to us in Christ,
  - That our bodies will be raised up out of the grave at His command at the end of this age...
    - And that with Jesus our Lord, we will inherit the earth!
  - In Psalm 37, the LORD encourages us as His people that even though the wicked may greatly prosper in this present time and we may be very poor,
    - that in the end, the meek will inherit the earth.
      - Jesus picks up this promise in the beatitudes when He says, “blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!”
    - By the meek, He is not speaking about a certain timid personality type,
      - He is rather speaking of those who are meek in that they, realising that they are spiritually bankrupt and mourning over their sin,
        - are meek toward God—looking to Him to rule their lives because they realise what a disaster it would be for them to govern themselves.
          - In other words, they are those who have been restored to God as their God and have become His people.
    - And the promise is that we who are under Jesus, under His government and resting in Him as Saviour,
      - will inherit the earth with Him.
      - Those who never come to Him will not inherit the earth but will be cast into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

D. And the fourth way I hope that you will be like Jacob when you die is that you die in peace like he did.

1. Look at him...he draws up his feet and yields to death.
  - Verse 33 says: **And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.**
  - a. This is a picture of true serenity!
    - He is ready to die.
      - He is sure of God's promises, he has blessed his sons with oracles from God, and now, how peacefully he passes on to his people!
  - b. As I mentioned to you in the introduction to this sermon, before, Jacob, in his unbelief, had declared that he would go to Sheol in sorrow.
    - In Genesis 37:35, it says: **And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning."**
    - With these words, he indicated that even when he died, it would be impossible for him to be comforted.
    - With the loss of Joseph, he had lost hope, and he could not see how he could ever be consoled, even in death.
  - c. Now he is ready to die in peace, committing his spirit into God's hands.
    - He dies in peace.
2. Are you ready to meet your Maker? To die in peace?
  - a. I tell you, there will be no peace for you unless you are in Jesus Christ.
    - You are a condemned sinner apart from Him.
    - We were all conceived in iniquity and the only way to receive pardon is through Jesus Christ.
      - You must come to Him and trust in Him as the One who went to cross to atone for His peoples' sins.
  - b. You might die with a false peace if your conscience is hardened.
    - But when you enter Sheol, that false peace that you had will be replaced with great terror and dread.
    - There are many that die in the false comfort that they are good people or even resting in the bare fact that they have been baptised.
      - But there are many who are baptised with water who have not been baptised with the Holy Spirit.
      - They have the sign of God's cleansing from sin upon their body, but their soul is not cleansed by the Holy Spirit.
  - c. How can you tell if you have been baptised by the Holy Spirit?
    - You can tell because the Spirit convinces you of your sin and your need of Christ, and He renews your will so that you have received Christ and are resting upon Him alone for your salvation.
      - Your confidence is not in anything but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

TRANS> I truly hope that all of you will be able to die in true hope the way Jacob did.

- The LORD very graciously makes this gospel hope known to sinners all over the world.
- We have seen what this hope is—now I want you to:

## II. See how the LORD drew attention to the gospel of hope at Jacob's death.

- A. First, that He powerfully exhibited this gospel of hope to Jacob's sons.
- We have just been taking about what they saw...but consider the effect of it on them.
1. The things that happened at Jacob's death provided a lasting testimony for them.
    - a. How would any of them ever forget how their father had called the twelve of them together, and how he had blessed them all?
      - We have seen that though some of them had privileges revoked because of their sins, that none of them were cut off from the kingdom of God!
      - They all had an inheritance in the kingdom that was promised to them.
      - They could all rejoice that their names were written down in heaven, and that is by far the greatest blessing of all!
        - Even the taking away of privileges was part of God's faithfulness to them—He chastened them because they were His sons.
    - b. And how could they ever forget the great change they had seen their father...
      - He as a different man now than he had been even 20 years before.
      - It had taken all 147 years to bring him to this place of maturity, and no one was more aware of that transformation than his sons.
        - Surely this made an indelible impression on them all.
    - c. And how could they forget the trip to Canaan to bury their father—
      - and how he had insisted upon it because he believed that God would bring his family back to this land in future years and at last would raise them up to inherit it with their fathers.
  2. How this testimony of hope from God would help them in future years.
    - a. As the generations rolled on in Egypt and as times got hard when a Pharaoh arose in Egypt who did not remember Joseph, they would remember.
      - Instead of despairing, they could remember this testimony of their hope that God had given them through their father.
      - It was very important that it should be kept alive, and though many of them did despair, not all did...
        - And there was no excuse for them to despair with this testimony.
    - b. And so if you are a believer today, no matter how dark times should get in the church—what we see today—
      - with ministers who abandon Christ to seduce a woman...
      - or with young people in the church who forsake Christ for sin...
      - with churches closing down because no one is following Christ...
    - No matter how bad it may get, God has given the testimony of the gospel so that we might continue to trust in Him through it all.
  3. How thankful we should be that God has made the gospel known!
    - a. He does not leave His intentions to save His people in Christ hidden.
      - He publishes and has His intentions heralded!
      - He promised Christ for centuries and now He has sent Him.
      - Jesus has come and He has been publicly crucified in fulfillment of prophecy to atone for our sins.
      - And then He was raised from the dead and brought to God's right hand.

- b. God has also sent forth the apostles and the Holy Spirit to proclaim the good news to the church.
  - God's message through them is clear and plain.
    - **1Jo 5:10-11: He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**
  - The apostles preached it from the beginning, and God poured out His Spirit on the church (that is, on Israel) so that many believed.
- c. These events are impressed upon the church's memory and written down in God's Word.
  - With this testimony made known to us, we have no reason to despair.
  - God has made the hope of the gospel conspicuous to His church in all ages.

TRANS> But it is not only to the church that He has made this testimony known.

B. Secondly, that He powerfully exhibited the hope of the gospel to the Egyptians.

1. Pharaoh's response to Joseph's request to bury his father in Canaan is surprising.
  - a. You can see the request in verses 4 & 5:
    - **Gen 50:4-5: And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup> 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' "**
    - Joseph almost seems a little sheepish in making this request...
      - Not only does he make it through the agency of others, but he also presents it, not as his own desire, but as what his father made him swear.
      - Perhaps he was concerned that Pharaoh might take offense that the land of Egypt was not good enough for his father!
  - b. But Pharaoh not only grants the request, but also allows Joseph to take the dignitaries of Egypt with a military escort!
    - **Genesis 50:6-10: And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." <sup>7</sup> So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup> as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering. <sup>10</sup> Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father.**
    - This is remarkable—
      - that this rustic shepherd who had come to Egypt in the famine should be accompanied by this great retinue!



2. Consider that by this, the LORD was graciously giving testimony to Egypt that in Jacob was the hope of salvation for them!
  - a. God had promised that through the seed of Jacob, all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
    - 1) Already, it had been through Joseph that Egypt had been saved from the famine...
      - The God of Jacob had raised Joseph up as a prophet to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and Pharaoh had believed the word.
    - 2) And we have seen evidence that Joseph made known the hope that all the nations would be blessed through his family.
      - a) There was the testimony of his steward when he spoke to Joseph's brothers and used the language of the covenant, saying,
        - **Genesis 43:23: But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money."**
      - b) And then there was the testimony of Pharaoh himself when Jacob was brought to meet him,
        - And though it is the greater person who blesses the lesser, we saw that Jacob blessed Pharaoh instead of the other way around!
        - Jacob did not refer to himself as "your servant" as was customary in speaking to a king, and Pharaoh put up no objection.
          - He seemed to be pleased to receive the blessing of this lowly shepherd.
          - He recognised through Joseph that blessing was to come through him!
  - b. And it seems quite reasonable to suppose that Jacob was given all of this honour at his funeral because of this hope in Egypt.
    - That Pharaoh and perhaps many others rejoiced in the promises of salvation for them through Jacob's seed.
    - God, in His providence, gave Egypt this powerful testimony the salvation of Egypt was in Israel.
      - For them this great event of the burial of Jacob would also be remembered.
      - Here was the father of their beloved vizier Joseph, the man that God had sent to them to save them from the famine!
    - By this grand procession, God graciously enforced the reality that His blessing was to come through Jacob's seed to Egyptians too.
      - This is the only source of blessing for all nations.
- c. There can be little doubt that many of the Egyptians did believe in the day of Joseph...
  - There were even those who believed at the time of the Exodus and who accompanied Israel when they left Egypt, becoming part of them...
  - And even more, there are many Egyptians who have believed since the coming of Jesus Christ.

- Egypt was one of the places where the gospel first went, and to this day there is not only a remnant, but also those who are coming to Jacob's God for salvation.

TRANS> But this testimony that salvation is of the Jews—that salvation is in Jacob for the whole world, was not only given to Egypt, but even to the Canaanites.

- And that is the third place of testimony...

C. That the Lord powerfully exhibited the hope of the gospel to the Canaanites.

1. In verse 11, we see how this event got their attention also...so much that they even named this place on account of what happened.

- **11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.**

2. But of course, the Canaanites represent not the nations that are to be blessed, but those that are to be cursed.

a. For them, this is not so much a testimony of salvation, but of condemnation.

- Not that they understood this at this time...
  - But it was a kind of omen of their destruction that would come when the family of Jacob returned to Canaan at the appointed time.
  - You see, when the kingdom of Christ is exalted, the kingdom of Satan will be destroyed.

b. By this, we are reminded that the testimony of the gospel is both a testimony of hope as well as a testimony of condemnation.

- That salvation is in Jacob—that is, in Christ who comes from Jacob—testifies to those who are not in Christ that they are condemned.
- In 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, Paul recognises this as the result of preaching the gospel...
  - He describes it as a triumphal procession such as Rome had when they would parade through the streets with those they had conquered in the parade—testifying of their victory.
    - They would burn incense, and to those who were with Rome, it was the fragrance of victory, but to those who were conquered, it was the fragrance of death.
  - Paul says, **2 Cor 2:14-16: Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?**

c. For those in Israel and those in Egypt and the nations who are trusting in Christ, the gospel is the aroma of life, but for those of Canaan—that is, those who reject Christ—it is the aroma of death.

- That is why the gospel is hated among unbelievers.
  - Christ's victory is a reminder to them of their rejection so long as they refuse to repent and come to Him.

- This is not to say that no Canaanite could be saved though!
    - When Israel came to Jericho, Rahab and her house feared God, and the victory of Israel in Canaan was the fragrance of life for them!
      - Rahab even become a mother through whom Christ came!
    - And there were other Canaanites as well...
      - Remember, for example, the people of Gibeon in Joshua 9 who feared God and came to make themselves slaves in Israel?
        - They were incorporated into Israel as servants who had the God of Israel as their God, and those who believed had salvation in Him.
  - 3. This reminds us that the testimony of Jacob's hope can even be a blessing, even to Canaanites, if they will only believe.
- D. Oh that people might receive the testimony that God has given us today!
1. Praise Him that He has made His saving intentions more conspicuous than ever in Christ!
    - a. As we saw, Christ was publicly crucified in fulfillment of prophecy, and then raised from the dead and preached in the world.
    - b. In His great mercy, the LORD has called His church to go into all the world with the promise that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.
      - It is a sure hope to all who will receive it.
  2. Pray that in His gracious providence, the LORD would continue to spread His testimony of hope in Christ among the nations.
    - a. Pray that the LORD would continue to raise up missionaries and ministers to carry the gospel and that they would be faithful to their calling.
    - b. Pray that the LORD would protect them and prosper them in their work, that they might speak as they ought to speak.
    - c. And pray for me as I labour to preach the gospel from this pulpit.
  3. Do your part, along with the rest of the church, in spreading the gospel of hope.
    - a. All who have received the gospel have the witness in themselves.
      - You adorn the gospel when you live in the hope of the gospel and cheerfully serve the Lord by His powerful grace that works in you.
      - You testify by your life the way Jacob did.
    - b. Not only that, but we also have opportunity to give a reason of the hope that is in us to those who are lost.
      - Be ready to do this—learn what the gospel is in such a way that you can clearly testify of your hope to others.
  4. And pray that sinners would receive the testimony that they might be saved.
    - a. Unless the Holy Spirit works effectually to convict sinners of their need of salvation and to reveal Christ to them as the only Saviour,
      - and not just that, but that the Spirit actually renews them from within so that they will actually trust in Christ,
        - not one will be saved.
      - Sinners are blind and they are dead in trespasses and sins until the Holy Spirit gives them life.
    - b. Pray for those who are in the church as well as those who are outside,

- and especially pray for our children, that God's Spirit would do this saving work in them that they might believe.
5. And by all means be sure that you yourself receive the testimony of the gospel.
    - a. If you do not, you will die in your sins and you will go to the grave in sorrow that will never be relieved.
      - You will bear the curse that Jesus came to bear for His people, and you will bear it forever in the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
    - b. But if you do receive God's testimony concerning Jesus, you will be welcomed into God's eternal kingdom in glory at death...
      - You will be gathered to Jacob and his people, and to all the saints, and best of all, you will be gathered to Jesus Christ forever and ever.

**Conclusion:** How kind the Lord is to make His promise known!

- All through the ages, He has been proclaiming the gospel to the nations that we might die in hope and not in despair through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Blessed be the LORD forever and ever, Amen.