

JACOB

17. The Art of Dying Well

Genesis 47:27-31; 49:29-50:14

Be patient - God hasn't finished with me yet

- Christians used to be known as people who knew how to die well
- “We do not give enough time to thinking about death and our going on... Death is not something to slip past, it should be victorious” - Lloyd-Jones

1. Prepare for your death by looking forwards not backwards

- Jacob doesn't live off the past – he lives off the future

a) Have a right understanding of death

- It's not the end – “I am about to be gathered to my people” – 49:29
- It's a going home – “to my people”
- It's about being with people – v33 emphasis on joining others
 - For Christian – it's especially about being with Christ
- It's about riches there – no mention of being buried with all he had

b) Keep your eye on God's promises

- Emphasis on being buried in Canaan is because God promised the land
- Not sentiment, but promise – not buried with Rachel!
- We need to keep looking ahead to what God has promised – we need to know his promises
- Promises about Heaven, promises about us getting there

c) Point others to what God has promised

- Jacob points his sons to their true home, and to God's promises
- When we face death we need to keep pointing others to God's faithfulness, and to his promises
- When they see us pointing it gives them comfort

d) Live in such a way that your death is a witness to many

- Jacob gets a state funeral! Thousands of Egyptians know about the true God because of Jacob
- The Egyptians and the Canaanites see the importance of God's promises
- We need to live in such a way so that even our funeral is a witness
- Live so that no-one is surprised at your funeral

2. Be encouraged by this picture

- Original readers are the Israelites on the way to Canaan from Egypt
- This account was a great prophecy/picture of their journey

a) A great indication of where their future lay

- Leaving for a new land none of them had seen
- But those before them had been there
- We too leave for a land none of us have seen – but Christ has been there before us

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b) A great indication of the route they must take

- Similar route to exodus – comforting to know that others have gone ahead
- Christ the true and better Jacob has travelled the route before us
- He is the pioneer (trailblazer) of our faith - Heb 12:3 (NIV ‘author’)
- The going may be hard but the path of trust gets there

c) A tomb marks their belonging in this new land

- Through a grave they have rights to be there
- Through a grave we have rights to Heaven
- Our grave empty, because King is risen to help his people on the journey