



The Sermon

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Genesis 49:27-33

"Last Words of a Dying Man"

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TRANSCRIPT

So, I want you to take God's Word and turn with me to the book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 49, and today we're going to be looking at the last verses of Genesis 49, verses 27-33. The title of this message is "Last Words of a Dying Man. Last Words of a Dying Man." I want to begin by reading now the passage, starting in verse 27. And this is God's inspired and inerrant Word. Beginning in verse 27, "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil."

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one of them with the blessing appropriate to him. Then he charged them and said to them, 'I'm about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah - the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth.' When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people." This is the reading of God's Word, let us go to Him.

[Prayer] Father, as we open and have read your Word, it so speaks to the reality of life. We see here in the death of Jacob what is a foreview for each

and every one of us here today, that the time will come when we too will breathe our last and will be gathered either to Your people or to the people of the world. And so what we're looking at here today is, really, so relevant, so speaks to the frailty of our own existence here. And so I pray from this one passage of Scripture you will meet each one of us where we are. As we've gathered here today there is a wide range of needs emotionally and physically, spiritually, relationally, financially. And Lord, we ask that You would connect this passage to our hearts for what we need to hear today, as we find ourselves in our present state and life. And so I ask now that You would fill me with Your Spirit. Lay Your hand upon me for good, that I could be Your mouthpiece. And for my brothers and sisters here today, I pray that You would give them great insight, and beyond that, a great desire to live out the principles that we will discover in this text. So God, now as Your Word goes forth, may You use it profitably in our lives, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we come to the final scene in the life of Jacob. Here are the last words before he dies. And how a man dies says so much about him. What he says on his deathbed is like a window that allows us to see into his soul. What he says on his deathbed reveals the condition of his heart and the state of his soul. Last words are very revealing words.

John Wesley who was one of the founders of the Methodist movement back in the 18th century once said, "Our people die well." And by that he meant that we have a firm confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we know what awaits us on the other side of death. It will be the open arms of our Savior Jesus Christ, and we will enter into the fellowship of the saints in glory.

Jacob dies well, as we look at this passage. He has but hours from dying; in fact, probably just minutes before he takes his last breath. And he calls his twelve sons to gather around him as he lays in his deathbed, and he calls each son individually by name to draw near to him in the presence of the others. And a spirit of prophecy rests upon Jacob and he is enabled by God to see into the future what awaits their descendants, as these twelve sons will become the originator of the twelve tribes of Israel. And as he looks

into the future, he speaks prophetically of what will be 400 years, 500 years, in some cases 1,000 years into the future; and as he does, he pronounces God's blessing upon them. And this speaks so much of where Jacob is at this moment in his walk with the Lord.

As he approaches the end of his life, he actually is growing in spiritual maturity and faith in God, he's growing stronger and stronger as he approaches the finish line. He's not slowing down, he's widening his stride, he's pressing on to the finish line, and he's pronouncing blessings. He is not dying as an angry old man, he is not dying with regrets, he is dying with full confidence in God as he, in essence, is passing on the baton to the next generation.

If you were to die today, if you knew you only had minutes to live, what would you say as your loved ones gather around you? What would be your last message to them? Whatever your answer is, it would reveal so much about what is most important to you and where your heart is in relationship to God.

There's a very real sense as we look at this final scene of Jacob's life; it really needs to be something of a standard for you and me as we come to the end of our life's journey. And unless the Lord tarries, every one of us here today will find ourselves in a scene exactly like this. And so I want you to die well. I want you to die with full confidence in God and what awaits you on the other side.

So let's walk through this passage; it's a very tender scene. And the first thing I want you to note, in verse 27, is "the last prophecy." As we come to verse 27, Jacob has already addressed the first eleven brothers, and he now comes to his youngest son, the baby of the family. It's Benjamin. And he calls his name and he says, "Benjamin." And wherever Benjamin had been standing around the death bed, he, no doubt, moves forward to his father's position. His father now is sitting up on the side of the bed, and with every ounce of strength that he can draw forth he has just enough breath to pronounce this last blessing, and he says, "Benjamin."

And you'll note in verse 27 there's only three lines - one verse, three lines. And it seems so insignificant, because we just saw Joseph last Lord's Day, verses 22-26, five entire verses; and Judah had five verses, beginning in verse 8. We come to the end, and it's almost anticlimactic: "Benjamin." And perhaps it is that Jacob does not have much strength left in him to give a more expanded prophetic foreview. He says, "Benjamin."

Now Benjamin will be a very important tribe in the nation Israel, you need to know that. There will be two great Sauls that will come from his loins. There will be King Saul, the first king over Israel. And then there will be Saul of Tarsus; he too comes from the tribe of Benjamin, who became the apostle Paul. And Queen Esther came from the tribe of Benjamin as well. And so it is a very distinguished and noted tribe.

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf." And this was expressed in what we call prophetic, symbolic language, in which there are symbols, and there is a metaphorical expression. So he's not saying that Benjamin is literally a wolf, what he is saying is, "The future descendants that will come from you will be like a ravenous wolf." Literally, from the Hebrew, a wolf that tears apart. He will rip to shreds those that he goes after. And what this is indicating is that the tribe of Benjamin will be very warlike, they will be very aggressive. They will not be passive, they will be aggressive and dynamic. And they're not going to play defense, they're going to play offense, the tribe of Benjamin. There will be warriors that will come marching out of the tribe of Benjamin and will attack the enemies of the people of God, and provide national security for the people of God once they enter into the Promised Land.

And so in the second line he says, "In the morning he devours the prey," - again, speaking prophetically into the future, those who will come from the tribe of Benjamin. "Devours" means to kill and to consume. They will be like predators, and the prey will be those who are the enemies in the land of Canaan - "and in the evening he divides the spoil." The imagery here is that he kills more than he can eat, and by his killing he provides blessings for the others. He will be a front-line warrior, if you will. So the tribe of

Benjamin will produce victorious warriors. And in 1 Chronicles 8:40 it says that they are mighty men of valor, that they are archers. And so they are groomed to kill and to defend national security for Israel.

And the tribe of Benjamin will be given such a special allotment of land. You know, as they come into the Promised Land over 400 years later, they will divide up the land, and Benjamin will receive one of the choicest places, right in the very epicenter of the entire Promised Land. Right in the center will be the tribe of Benjamin; and in that appointed land is Jerusalem, and that is where the temple will be built, and that is where the sacrifices will be offered. I mean, they will be given prime real estate location in the Promised Land. And when the nation of Israel will divide after Solomon's death, there will be ten tribes to the north, they will be the northern kingdom. There will be two tribes to the south; it will be Benjamin and Judah that will remain loyal to the Davidic king. And so Benjamin, the tribe of Benjamin is a very prominent and important tribe.

And one such example of how aggressive they were – I'm not going to have you turn to it, but I'll just try to relate it to you – is in Judges chapter 3 during the time, after the book of Joshua, after they've come in and occupied the land and they are to kill all the Canaanites, and before the kings of Israel will begin their reign (Saul and David and Solomon), there is this period that is described in the book of Judges. And the nation of Israel goes through the same recurring cycles over and over again, that they are walking with the Lord, then they are lured into idolatry, then God strengthens a foreign king to attack the people of God and to subject them under their tyranny. And sometimes it'll take like 18 years before the people of God will repent and cry out to God. And when God hears this cry for deliverance, God will raise up a judge, He will raise up a deliverer, and He will break the yoke of oppression that has been put on the people of God.

The second deliverer, the second judge to be raised up in the book of Judges was a Benjamite from the tribe of Benjamin, and his name was Ehud, and he was given an assignment by God to go to the foreign king whom God has strengthened to dominate the people of God. His name is Eglon. Nobody named your kids, by the way, these names. So Ehud goes after Eglon and

says, "I have a message for you from God," and he pulls out his sword, and this Benjaminite thrusts it into the belly of this Moabite king, and the Bible says that he was very fat and overweight, OK - I won't make application at this point to you - and the knife goes in so far, and the king was so fat that he can't pull the knife out, and it says refuse comes pouring out. Just a horrible scene. And then this Benjaminite, he just locks the door and leaves. And the servants stand there knocking on the door and no one answers, until finally they push the door open, and they go in and they see their king dead. That was from the tribe of Benjamin - warlike aggressors fighting to protect the rest of the nation.

Now as I thought about this, "So what is the application for us today? I mean, how does this connect with my life? How does this connect with your life? What is the relevance of this?" and there's two things. The first is that I want to remind you that there is the doctrine of the just war. And the doctrine of the just war goes throughout the entire Bible, and it teaches that there is a proper war for a nation to enter into and to enter to kill: to protect innocent lives, women and children being threatened and raped and great harm. It is within the will of God for a Christian to enlist in the military and to go to war to kill.

And we need to be reminded of this, because it's been a while since we've had a real war that we've entered into, and we've become a soft people, and we've lost the will to fight for what is right and for what is good. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the divine warrior, and when He returns at the second coming, there will be a sharp two-edged sword that will come from His mouth, and the blood of His enemies is already drenching His robe, and He will go and slaughter His enemies and cast them into hell. We need to remember that there is a time, there is a place to fight, that we don't just roll over and play dead.

I've been to Russia on four different occasions, and each time I went for an entire week and just lectured and preached from 8:00 in the morning till 9:00 at night. And Russian pastors got on trains and came from Siberia, they came from all over Russia, that massive land mass. And I had numerous Q&A's with them, and it came out in the Q&A, and especially

those who were in the Baptist Union, that they were pacifists, that they did not believe in war for the right reason, and did not believe even in self-defense, that if their own daughter was being attacked by an intruder into their house that they did not feel that they had the right to take out the life of the one who's taking the life of your daughter. I certainly wouldn't want to be their daughter.

Let us remember from the tribe of Benjamin that within the will of God there is a just war to fight in order to protect innocent lives. And we've become, as I've already said, a very soft people, and we've lost a sense of the fear of God and a Christian consciousness of truth. And we see in the tribe of Benjamin here what transcends generations and applies even to this day.

The second point of application for all of us, because most of us will never be in that frontlines of fighting a battle; but we all are drawn into spiritual warfare and "we are all called to fight." You're called to fight, I'm called to fight. And we are to, as Jude 3 says, contend earnestly for the faith. First Timothy 6:12 says, "Fight the good fight of faith." It's not a hands-on combat battle, it is a war that is fought on our knees in prayer. It is a war that is fought with our witness, with our testimony of the truth, with the preaching of the Word and the dissemination of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And in 1 Timothy 1:18, the Bible says, "Fight the good fight."

There is a good fight for you, sir, ma'am. None of us are spiritual pacifists in spiritual warfare, and we are all enlisted into God's army, and we are to, Ephesians 6:13, "take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day." And 2 Corinthians 10:4 says, "The weapons of our warfare" – did you hear that? – "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh," – meaning bullets and guns – "but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." And what these fortresses are are secular ideologies and godless philosophies, and we are to utterly destroy them with the truth of the Word of God.

It matters, of course, not just what we say, but how we say it; and we are to be gracious and speak the truth in love. But we cannot let the devil's lies go unaddressed and unrebuked. We are to be the aggressors in spiritual war, and that is why we pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," because the devil is trying to take over so much turf and so much territory in this world, and all too often the church is nowhere to be found, that voices are muted and silenced, and Christians are wanting to withdraw and stay in a holy huddle and have forgotten they're to be light and salt in the world. We must fight like the tribe of Benjamin. We must fight against temptation. We must fight against the lust of our own flesh. We must fight against the lures of the devil. We must fight against the spirit of this age. We're to be like the tribe of Benjamin.

The second thing I want you to note in verse 28, "the last blessing." We saw the last prophecy in verse 27, now the last blessing in verse 28. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. Now when he says these, "all these," he's referring to all the twelve sons listed in verses 3-27. And please note - this is so interesting - he says tribes, "twelve tribes." Well, he's speaking to the twelve sons, and so this obviously has a futuristic implication and to be understood that there will be tribes that will come from each of these twelve sons. So he is peering over the horizon of time into the future,

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father" - referring to Jacob - "said to them when he blessed them." Now the blessing ultimately comes from God, so he becomes one who speaks the blessing from God to them. And we read, "He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to them." Three times in this short little verse we read the word "blessed, blessed, blessing." That's the focus that Jacob now is pronouncing the blessing of God upon his sons and their descendants who will become the twelve tribes of Israel.

This word "appropriate" is an important word that indicates that not everyone receives the same blessing. There are twelve sons, and each son receives an individual blessing that is appropriate to them, that this blessing is not being cut out with a cookie cutter and everyone receives the same blessing, I think you can see this, that they had received the blessing



appropriate to him. If you have an ESV translation it's translated "suitable to him." In the King James it is translated "everyone according to his blessing." It's all the same idea. Some will receive more blessing, others will receive less blessing.

Now we need to understand as it relates to eternal blessing we all receive the same blessing. We all are equally saved, right? We all are equally justified by faith. The righteousness that has clothed you to stand faultless before the Lord is the same righteousness that has clothed me to stand equally faultless before the Lord. We have all been washed by the same blood of Christ. It's been said that the ground at the foot of the cross is level. We have been equally redeemed from the slave market of sin, and we have been equally reconciled to God, so no one is more saved than anyone else. That's eternal blessing. But temporal blessings, which are for this lifetime, there's a difference from one person to the next.

Now as this related to the tribes of Israel, the twelve sons of Jacob, God had already marked out to begin with what their portion of land would be in the Promised Land. And the Promised Land was not like a flat pool table where all the land is the same. No, there's towering mountains, and there's low valleys, and there's fertile farmland, and there's desert land and hills, and the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. And so when they go into the Promised Land, everybody doesn't receive the same piece of real estate. Everyone doesn't receive the same. Some are on the Mediterranean Sea (Asher and Manasseh and Dan and Judah), others are east of the Jordan (that's Gad and Reuben and half of Manasseh), others are around the Sea of Galilee to the north, and others are down in the south.

And once they go into the Promised Land and they are in different places in the Promised Land, they will have different vocations. Some will be shepherds, depending upon the region, depending upon the soil, depending upon the climate. Some will be shepherds. Others will be growers of vineyards. Others will be fishermen. Some will be farmers. Others will be tanners of hide, and others will be Levites and priests, and others will be prophets, and some will be kings and all the like. So, God in a temporal

blessing has a different place and a different occupation for the different individuals in the different tribes.

Now the application for us should be obvious. The same is true in the Christian life. As I've already said, we all have the same eternal blessings, but our temporal blessings will differ from one believer to the next, to the next, according to the will and the purpose of God. We're all in the kingdom of God, but we have different places within the kingdom of God. Just like Israel, they were all in the Promised Land, but they had different places that they were in the Promised Land.

And so, some of us are called to preach, and others to teach, and some of us administrate, and others sing, and others play instruments, and others usher, and some serve in the nursery, and some are greeters, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And so you need to understand that wherever it is that God has placed you and however it is that God has gifted you to serve Him is a divine appointment, and you have been placed there strategically by the all-wise God for you to carry out your assignment and your mission here in the kingdom of God.

And so we see that so clearly with the distribution of the twelve tribes of Israel. They didn't all get the same; but according to the wisdom of God, they had an assigned place within the Promised Land. And there needs to be a sense of humble acceptance of whatever it is God has entrusted to you to do. It's a sacred mission that has been given to you as a stewardship.

The next thing I want you to notice in verse 29, "the last request," verses 29-32. Jacob makes one last request and it concerns where he is to be buried. And so in verse 29, "Then he" - Jacob - "charge them." The word "charged" literally in the Hebrew means commanded, gave orders. And so my heading, "the last request," it's really more than a request, it's the last command from the patriarch himself, the patriarch of the family.

"He charged them" - all twelve sons - "and said to them," - now watch this - "I'm about to be gathered to my people." That's what we call a euphemistic expression, an idiomatic expression, a colloquial expression for death. "I'm about to be gathered to my people." What he is saying is, "My strength is leaving me. I can barely breathe. I can barely pronounce another blessing. The time has now come for me to be gathered to my people."

What a beautiful way to express what death is to a believer. And I think all of us from time to time think about death. I think all of us from time to time think about, "How much time do I have left? Where will I be? Who will be around me? Will I struggle, will I fight when that time comes?" And that time will come. And what a beautiful way for Jacob to paint this picture of death for a Christian, because it's different for us than it is for an unbeliever.

In fact, in the New Testament in 1 Thessalonians 4, death is referred to for a Christian as being asleep; it's just totally harmless. And as you see the body just laying there, though the body is dead, it looks as though they are asleep, and their soul and their spirit has already immediately gone to be with the Lord. They're not even there, that's not the real person. The real person is in heaven before the family even knows you're dead.

But there's three things I want to draw to your attention as we look at this expression in verse 29, "I'm about to be gathered to my people." What a beautiful expression. Three things. Number one, "There is life after death." Death does not end it all. After you die, you will never be more alive after you die than while you were alive. You will actually enter into a heightened state of consciousness, and you will be in the presence of God, you will be in the presence of Christ, and it's glorious. It's been said if you knew how glorious it is, you'd stop looking both ways when you cross the street. I mean, you'd just want to depart now and be there. And so there is a state of conscious existence after death, and Jacob knows that; and you and I need to know that. In fact, it's not to be resisted in God's proper timing, it's to be embraced in God's proper timing.

The second thing that we learn here is that "there is a reunion with other believers after death." I mean, this is wonderful. "I'm about to be gathered to my people." Now "my people" refer to all believers. We're not going to be gathered to everybody in the world, because not everybody in the world is going where we're going. I mean, our soul is glory-bound. We will graduate to glory when we leave this world, and we will be with our people, not the devil's people, our people. And there's a sharp line of demarcation between "my people" and the world. And there's going to be a glorious fellowship, a sweetness of fellowship. There's not going to be anymore misunderstandings. There's not going to be anymore hurt feelings. There's not going to be anymore being neglected or overlooked - none of that. It will all be perfect, blissful fellowship. It will be the happiest time of our life obviously.

And then, third - well, let me say this, one more thing. When we get to heaven and we're going to be with our people, we're not going to be segmented into different rooms and we'll have the Methodists over here in this room and the Presbyterians over here in this room and then the Baptists over here in this room and then the independents as close to the throne as we could possibly be. No, we're not going to be divided out. There are no denominations in heaven, it's just one body of Christ, just one citizenship in the kingdom of God.

I love George Whitfield, the great evangelist from the 18th century. He used to preach, and he would carry on in the sermon an imaginary conversation as if with Peter: "Peter, are there any Anglicans up there?" and the answer is, "No Anglicans up here." "Are there any Methodists up there?" "No, we've never seen one." "Are there any Baptists?" "No way." "Then who's up there?" and the answer comes down, "Only those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. Only those who have been born again are in heaven."

Now there is a role and a place for doctrinal distinctives today, I understand that, and different groups, I understand that. I want you to know, I'm not a Baptist, I'm not a Methodist, I'm not a Presbyterian, I am a follower of Jesus Christ. That's the One who bought me. That's the One that has my

allegiance and my loyalty. And so when we get to heaven, we're not going to be assigned different rooms, it's just going to be one grand, glorious fellowship with all the believers. There's going to be Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Malachi, and Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Peter, and Paul, and Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and Tyndale, and Spurgeon, and Sproul, and it's just going to be a glorious gathering to my people. You need to be one of God's people.

And then the third truth that we see from this phrase, just as we think about this phrase and chew on it for a moment, when he says in verse 29, "I'm about to be gathered to my people," there's a sense of immediacy about this. There's no holding position that we step into over here, and after some period of time we get out of the holding position, and then we're taken up to heaven to be with God. That's not how it works. I mean, there's no like purgatory over here, and we go step into purgatory until our relatives pay enough money to get us out of purgatory to pay for buildings in Rome. No, not at all. We go straight to heaven. What did Jesus say to the thief on the cross? Luke 23, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise. Today!" In 2 Corinthians 5:8, Paul says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." There's no gap, there's no in between time; you go straight to heaven.

And so, in the middle of verse 29 and extending to verse 32, this obviously was very important to Jacob when he said it, and Moses when he wrote this, that we now have three-and-a-half verses devoted to where he's going to be buried. I mean, if you would have asked me, "OK, we'll give you three-and-a-half verses on any subject, what would you like to have added to the Bible?" I can come up with a list very quickly of what else I would like to know. It's not going to be high on my list, I don't think, like, "I just need to know where Jacob's going to be buried"; except there's some significance here. And so let's look at this.

He says, "Bury me with my fathers" - that refers to Abraham, and it refers to Isaac, his forefathers - "in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." And that goes back to Genesis 23 when Abraham buys a cave that's in a field. So he buys the field, he buys the cave in which he and his

descendants will be buried in. And they tried to give it to him, and he says, "No, no, no, I'm going to pay for it." And so it's a very special place.

Verse 30, "in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is by Mamre, in the land of Canaan," - I mean all this detail about where he's to be buried. What's going on here? - "which Abraham" - middle of verse 30 - "bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site." And you would think, "OK, we've covered it now."

Now, verse 31, there's more. "There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah," - and now Jacob speaks first person - "and there I buried Leah." And we think it's over, "OK, enough attention drawn to the burial site."

Well now, verse 32, he keeps it going, "the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth." It was very important to Jacob that he be buried in the Promised Land, because God has promised to give this to His chosen nation. "And my father is buried there, my grandfather is buried there, and I'm to be buried there." And it is a statement of solidarity, it is a statement of identification, it is a statement of unity that "I am all in with my people. And so my soul and my spirit will go immediately to my people, and my body, my dead bones will also go to my people. So my body is going to be buried with my people, my soul and my spirit is going to go be with my people," and it's his way, really, of saying, "I'm all in with what God is doing and with what God is doing with my people, and I don't even want my bones to be separated from what God is doing." And when you boil it down and get to the foundation of this, it really underscores his extraordinary faith in the promises of God, that "God has promised us this Promised Land, and I want my bones to be in it."

And you and I need to have such a tenacious faith like this, that "I am all in with God. And even when it comes time for me to die, I'm going to go be with my people; and even where I'm buried, in a sense, I'm with my people." Who are your people? Are your people the people of God? Because when He says, "I'm about to be gathered to my people," that's a statement of

what we call the exclusivity of salvation in Jesus Christ alone, that there's no other way to get to heaven except by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

We've got one last verse, verse 33. There's still some meat on the bone. So, verse 33, this heading is, "the last breath." And so we read in verse 33, "When Jacob finished charging his sons," referring to the prophecies and the blessings of this entire chapter. And really what should strike us is what is not mentioned here. There's no panic in Jacob's voice. There's no whimpering or crying. There there's no fear in his heart. He is confident that he is one step away from glory, one step away from "my people." And there's no struggle, there's no fight, there's no clinging to stay here. He knows that the time has come.

"And when he finished charging his sons," - notice, please - "he drew his feet into the bed." That indicates that he had mustered all the strength that he possibly could to sit up on the side of the bed at this moment, and his feet are dangling over the edge of the bed so that he can have as close eye to eye communication with each son as they come. So he's pulled himself up and moved his legs over to the side of the bed as he's seated there with all the strength that he could, and he has no more strength left.

"And so he drew his feet into the bed" - he gathered them up, pulled them up - "and breathed his last." He has no more strength to even take in another lung full of air. As he breathes it out of his lungs, it's the last time. And he's over 130 years old, some estimate he's 147 years old, and the year is probably 1858 BC. The Christ will not come from almost 2,000 years.

And we see this same phrase again, "and was gathered to his people." Again, there's no intermediary state. There's no halfway house. There's no holding place. There's no purgatory. There's no being stopped at the gates by Peter and being investigated. No, he goes immediately into glory and into the fellowship of the saints with his people. His body will be buried in Canaan, but his soul and spirit is glory-bound and will enter into the very presence, the immediate presence of other believers, but more than that,

into the immediate presence of God and into the presence of Jesus Christ. That's exactly what we see here.

So, what will it be like for you when this time comes? You would be so wise today to think about your last day. Jonathan Edwards, arguably the greatest preacher ever born on American soil, wrote 70 resolutions when he was 18 and 19 years old. One of those resolutions was to "always think about the circumstances of my death." He wanted to take the long look, and he wanted to end strong. He wanted to well. And when he did pass away on the second floor of the President's House at Princeton – then it was the College of New Jersey – he died so strong in the Lord, because he had prepared his entire life for that last page of the last chapter of his life. It was by no coincidence that Jonathan Edwards became Jonathan Edwards, because from the time he was a teenage boy, he had his eyes set on the finish line and wanted to reach that finish line in full stride, running the race that God had set before him.

So, how will it end for you? What will be your last words as you're surrounded by either your family, a doctor, a nurse, and you realize, "It is now time for my last breath"? Will there be a full, firm confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ to take you home to the Father's house? And there's only one way for that to happen, and that is for you to put your faith in Jesus Christ.

I will conclude by telling you the most important last words ever to be spoken on this planet by a dying man. They were uttered 2,000 years ago by a man who was hanging upon a Roman cross. He was nailed to that cross at nine o'clock in the morning, and at 12 noon as He hung upon that cross and had to pull Himself up for each breath of air, God snuffed out the sun, and the entire universe became as dark as midnight. And it was at that time that God the Father transferred the sins of every one of us who would ever believe in Christ to His Son. And the Bible says, "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ." And from 12 noon until three o'clock in the afternoon, He suffered under the wrath of God as He bore our sins, as He shed His blood to make the only atonement for our sins, to wash away our sins. At three



o'clock, this dying Savior uttered His last words, "It is finished!" And by that, He made, the atonement has been made, the pardon has been purchased, forgiveness has been secured. There is nothing left to do except to receive it as a free gift with the open hands of faith, that there's nothing that we can do to add to the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Those are the greatest last words ever to be spoken, "It is finished!" Please note, He did not say, "I am finished." He said, "It is finished!" Salvation has been accomplished, and now salvation needs to be applied to you, and that comes by faith alone in Jesus Christ. And so if you have never believed with all of your heart that Jesus is the Savior of sinners, that He was buried, and on the third day He was raised from the dead, that He has ascended back to the right hand of God the Father, if you have never put your faith in this Christ, I call you, I urge you this very moment, right where you're seated in the privacy of your own heart, to commit your life to Jesus Christ, to surrender your soul, to submit all that you are to the lordship of Jesus Christ. And if you will do that, He will receive you, He will take you in. He says, "Him who comes to Me I will in no wise cast out."

So He's calling you this very moment. He's calling you from heaven through the pages of His Word to come to Him by faith. He says, "Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He says, "If any man thirsts, let him come to Me and drink; and out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."

You are invited this day to come to the King's banquet feast, to come to the King Himself and be received with open arms of forgiveness and pardon; but you must come. You must come all the way to Christ and not hesitate and not halter between two opinions, not be in the valley of decision, but to come all the way to Christ; and He will save you this day. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, this passage is so real to life. It is exactly where we are, because we are all facing our own death. Whether it's today, next year, next decade, next several decades, were all facing death. And when we leave this world we want to be gathered to Your people, and there's only

one way for that to take place, and that is for there to be faith in Jesus Christ. So may You bring to pass this glorious salvation in hearts and lives here today, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. [End]

I leave you with this closing benediction: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." God bless you.