THE ORCHARD

The God Who Is With Us

Genesis 48:1-49:33
In Our Need
Pastor Tom Yoon
November 15, 2026

Introduction:

- When we look at Genesis chapter 48, we see a man who kept his faith to the very end.
  - Jacob's faith wasn't always strong.
  - At times, he was filled with doubts.
  - At times, he tried to force his way.
  - There were times he acted in fear.
  - But through it all, he persevered in faith.

- And because Jacob held on to God's promises, his faith grew stronger.
  - Jacob went from trusting himself, to fully trusting the Lord.

- We may be temped to give up on God.
  - To doubt his word.
  - To disengage.
  - To stop trusting his goodness.
  - It may be, that's how you feel today.

- But with all my heart, I want to encourage you to keep holding on.
  - To keep serving the Lord.
  - To keep loving others.
  - To keep fighting sin.
  - To keep believing God's promises.
  - To keep seeking God.

- Because as you hold on to Christ, you'll discover that it was Christ who has been holding on to you.

Point 1:

- First, we see in our passage Jacob's confidence in the Lord.

- In our passage, we're told that Jacob's sons heard their father was ill.
  - And so, all his sons came to see their father before he died.

- And in chapter 48, Joseph brought his two sons to his father.
  - And even though Jacob was really weak.

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- He summoned his strength, and he sat up, and blessed Joseph's sons.
- Listen to verse 2.
- **"Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed."**

- Can you picture Joseph telling his father:
  - "Please father, it's okay."
  - "You don't have to sit up."
  - And he says:
  - "I need to sit up."
  - And so, with the last ounce of strength he had, he sat up to bless Manasseh and Ephraim.

- Here's what's interesting about this.
  - In the book of Hebrews, this is what the writer chooses to mention, when speaking about Jacob.
  - Listen to Hebrews 11 verse 21:
  - **"By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff."** Hebrews 11:21
  - Don't you find that a little odd?
  - Think about all the ways Jacob put his faith in God.
  - Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed.
  - He obeyed God and returned to Canaan, even though he had to face Esau.
  - And last week, we saw how he trusted God by leaving the promised land and going to Egypt.
  - But the writer in Hebrews points to this moment, at the end of Jacob's life.
  - Why in the world would the writer focus on this?

- The reason is because, by blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob was showing his full confidence in the Lord.
  - This blessing showed his faith in God's will.
  - Jacob sensed that God was going to give Ephraim the greater blessing rather than his older brother.
  - And even though, Joseph wanted his father to give his older son the greater blessing.
  - Jacob crossed his hands and placed his right hand on Ephraim.
  - It was customary for the older son to receive the greater blessing.
  - But Jacob followed God's will.

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- If you remember, Isaac tried to force the blessing on Esau, his older son.
  - And do you remember what happened?
  - It divided the family.
  - It caused a lot of trouble.

- But even though Joseph opposed what Jacob was doing, Jacob still obeyed the Lord.
  - Listen to Genesis 48 verses 18 and 19.
  - **"Joseph said to his father…"**
  - **"Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head."**
  - **"But his father refused and said…"**
  - **"I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he…"**
  - Genesis 48:18-19

- When Jacob was born, he was clutching Esau's heel.
  - He used his hands to bless himself.
  - But when Jacob was dying, he used his hands to bless others and worship God.

- And after blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob declares with full confidence:
  - **"Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers."** Genesis 48:21

- Jacob faced many trials.
  - He made a ton of mistakes.
  - He faced many setbacks.
  - Yet he kept trusting the Lord.
  - And his faith grew stronger.
  - He was confident that God would keep his word.

- Our faith won't be perfect.
  - We'll make many mistakes.
  - We'll face many unexpected turns.
  - We'll face many setbacks.
  - But as we keep seeking God's will.
  - God will strengthen our faith.

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- Here we see, Jacob's confidence in the Lord.

Point 2:

- Second, we also see, God's steadfast grace throughout Jacob's life.

- When Jacob arrived in Egypt, he said to Pharoah in chapter 47 verse 9:
  - **"The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life…"** Genesis 47:9
  - In other words, it's like Jacob was saying:
  - "Pharoah, I've lived for 130 years."
  - "I know it sounds like a long and blessed life."
  - "But honestly, it's been hard."

- And it's true that Jacob faced many difficult days.
  - Jacob had to leave his home and family.
  - He was deceived by Laban.
  - He endured years of conflict with his brother.
  - He watched Rachel die while giving birth.
  - Reuben betrayed him by sleeping with Bilhah, one of his wives.
  - His daughter, Dinah was assaulted.
  - Simeon and Levi massacred the men of Shechem.
  - He thought his son was eaten by a wild animal.
  - He faced a famine.
  - And he thought he would never see Simeon again.
  - Jacob faced many challenging times.

- But when you get to chapter 48, look at what he says in verse 15.
  - He says:
  - **"God…has been my shepherd all my life long to this day**…" Genesis 47:15
  - And then he says inverse 16:
  - **"The angel has redeemed me from all evil…"** Genesis 47:16
  - Isn't that interesting.
  - Before he said his days were evil.
  - But now he says that God has been his shepherd.

- In his old age, did Jacob forget about his past?

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  - Was he pretending that his life had been easy?
  - Not at all.
  - Rather, he was declaring that he now saw the hand of God, where he didn't see it before.
  - He saw, how through all his hardships, God was faithfully watching over him.

- Just think about Jacob, sitting up and looking at Joseph and his sons.
  - The son he thought he'd never see again.
  - Think about Jacob, looking at his sons and how they changed.
  - And how God had saved them from the famine and provided for them.
  - Think about Jacob, remembering his past mistakes, how he deceived his father, but seeing how God was gracious and merciful.
  - He saw how God brought good out of evil.
  - He saw how God was his shepherd.
  - He saw God's steadfast grace.

- There may be times when you face many difficult days.
  - When your faith seems dry.
  - When you feel like a failure.
  - When exhaustion overwhelms you.
  - When your children cause you to worry.
  - When others disappoint you.

- But don't give up.
  - Keep holding on to Christ.
  - Keep trusting him.
  - And one day, you'll be able to say:
  - **"God…has been my shepherd all my life long to this day**…" Genesis 47:15
  - You'll be able to see, that it was God's steadfast grace, that was holding you up.

- Here we see Jacob's confidence in the Lord.

- And God's steadfast grace in Jacob's life.

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Application:

- One reason Genesis 48 was written was to help us see how God can be trusted.
    - It was written to show how God is always working in our lives and how we need to depend on him.

- So, let me ask you this.
    - What would it look like for you, to put your full confidence in the Lord today?
    - What would it look like for you to give up control, and for you to depend on God with all your heart?

- When Jacob was born, he was holding on to Esau's heel.
    - But at end of his life, Jacob learned to trust in God's sovereign will.
    - He learned to depend on the Lord.

- And so, for the remainder of our time, let me show three ways we can stop trying to control our lives and start trusting in God's faithful plan and out our confidence in him.

Application 1:

- First, we can rest in God's plan, when we trust him with our disappointments.

- Jacob loved his wife, Rachel, very much.
    - That's why he worked an extra 7 years for her, after marrying Leah.

- He had hoped to spend many years with Rachel and their two sons.
    - She was the woman he loved.
    - This was the marriage he wanted.

- Sadly, Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin.
    - And Jacob was deeply grieved when his wife passed away.
    - It was a huge disappointment in his life.
    - Listen to what he says in verse 7:
    - **"As for me, when I came to Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way…and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath."** Genesis 48:7

- Life didn't turn out the way he had hoped.

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- He had let go of his future with Rachel.

- And then can you imagine how he felt after hearing that Joseph was gone?
  - Rachel's oldest son?
  - The Bible says that Jacob couldn't be consoled.

- And yet, even though Jacob was disappointed, he continued to trust the Lord.
  - He didn't turn away from God.

- And now, seeing Joseph and Rachel's grandsons, he was able to say how God had been his shepherd for all of his life.
  - In other words, he was able to look back and see how God had faithfully cared for him, even through he couldn't see it.

- Just like Jacob, we'll also face many disappointments in life.
  - Your marriage may not turn out the way you expected.
  - You may lose someone you love sooner than you expect.
  - Your career may not be what you hoped it would be.
  - You may not be where you hoped to be financially.
  - You may be here today, because you were supposed to be on a flight yesterday, but it got cancelled.
  - Cancelled flights can be disappointing.

- But let's trust God with our disappointments.
  - Because whether in this life or the life to come, looking back, we'll be able to say, how God was caring for us, even though we couldn't see it at the time.

- In 2013, before coming to The Orchard I applied for a position at another church.
  - And I really wanted to work at this particular church.
  - Some of my friends went to this church.
  - And I felt like it was the perfect place for me.
  - Sadly, after a few interviews, they told me they weren't going to hire me.
  - I was super disappointed.

- And so, after getting rejected from that church.
  - I had to consider my second option.
  - I applied to a church called The Orchard in Itasca.

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    - And by God's grace, they hired me.
    - And I'm so glad they did.
    - Because if I got the first job, I probably wouldn't be standing here.

- Looking back, I can see how God was working for my good
    - Even in my disappointment.

- We may not always see how God is working through our disappointments.
    - We may not understand why he closes certain doors.

- But we can trust that God knows what he's doing.
    - We can trust that in all things, God is accomplishing his good and perfect will.

- And so, let's trust God with our disappointments.
    - And trust that God is watching over us and working for our good, even when things don't go according to our plan.

Application 2:

- Second, we can rest in God's plan, when we trust him with our families.

- Jacob had a pretty broken family.
    - There was jealousy and conflict.
    - There was hatred and murder.
    - Isaac, Jacob's dad disobeyed God's command and tried to give Esau the blessing that was promised to Jacob.
    - His uncle cheated him.
    - One of his sons slept with his wife.
    - He thought his beloved son was dead.
    - They had a lot of problems.

- And this was painful for Jacob.
    - He was deeply disappointed by Reuben.
    - He was displeased by Simeon and Levi for murdering a whole city of men.
    - He mourned for Joseph for many years.

- And yet, God continued to work in this family.

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  - Even though Jacob couldn't see, God was working in his sons.
  - In fact, they repented of their sins and even reconciled with Joseph.
  - Judah was even willing to take Benjamin's place.

- And at the end of his life, Jacob saw how God had changed his family.
  - And in chapter 48 and 49, we see Jacob blessing his sons and entrusting them to the Lord.
  - Listen to verses 15 to 16:
  - **"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."** Genesis 48:15-16
  - It's like Jacob was saying to the Lord:
  - "God just as you watched over me and shepherded me, I entrust my children and my grandchildren, and all my decedents to you."
  - "May you watch over them, as you watched over me."

- Jacob knew that it was the Lord who changed his children.
  - And so, he entrusted them to God.

- And it's the same for us.
  - We can't change our family members.
  - We can't change our children, or our parents, or our siblings, or our spouse.

- But we can pray for them and entrust them to the Lord.
  - Because God is the only one who can transform their heart.

- In our relationship with others, our main responsibility isn't to change others.
  - Our duty isn't to force people to become who we want them to be.
  - Or to control their decisions or to make them meet our expectations.
  - Rather, it's our responsibility to love.
  - And to forgive.
  - To show compassion, even to those who may have hurt us.
  - To be patience, and kind, even when change is slow.
  - To speak truth and to wait for the Lord.
  - God hasn't called us to control others.

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    - He's called us to care for others.

- So, what can we do to entrust others to the Lord and to love them, even when change is slow?
    - We can keep reaching out and invest our time.
    - We can keep praying, asking the Lord to draw them closer to him.
    - We can set an example of godliness and faithful service to Christ.
    - We can speak truth and gently confront sin, and teach others, and trust the Lord to bring change.
    - We can meet them where they are and be patient without giving up hope.
    - Sometimes, entrusting others to God may mean keeping healthy boundaries, and creating distance when the relationship becomes harmful.

- God hasn't called us to control our family.
    - He's called us faithfully love our family, and to entrust them to him.

Application 3:

- Third, we can rest in God's plan, when we trust him with our obedience.

- Last week, we saw how Jacob went to Egypt, even though he had to leave the promised land.
    - When there was a famine in the land, God told Isaac to remain in the land.
    - But God commanded Jacob to go to Egypt.
    - And even though this meant moving his whole family out of Canaan.
    - Even though this meant giving up the comfort of his home.
    - Even though Jacob didn't know how everything would turn out.
    - He trusted the Lord and obeyed.

- And in our story today, when it came time for Jacob to bless Joseph's sons, he gave the greater blessing to Ephraim, Joseph's younger son.
    - Even though Joseph, Jacob's beloved son, wanted the greater blessing for the older son, Jacob obeyed the Lord.
    - Even though it went against the culture and practice of the time, Jacob obeyed the Lord.

- And why did Jacob give up his comfort?

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  - Why was he willing to leave the land?
  - Why was he willing to disappoint Joseph?
  - Why did he go against the culture of the time?

- Because Jacob was more focused on living for God's kingdom rather than living for himself.
  - He cared more about pleasing God, than pleasing people.
  - He cared more about living for God, than seeking his comfort.

- And so, I want to ask you this morning, are you truly trusting God with your obedience?
  - Have you been reading God's word and seeking him in prayer?
  - Have you made Sunday worship a priority in your life, or do you just go when you feel like it?
  - Have you deeply considered how you might serve others and invest in others?
  - Have you thought about how you can share Christ with the people God has placed around you?
  - Have you been teaching your children what means to love Jesus Christ with all their heart?
  - Have you considered what sacrifices God might be calling you and your family to make for the sake of his kingdom?

- And let's remember, how our obedience shows our love for God and brings glory to his name.
  - That's why Jesus says in John 14 verse 15:
  - **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."**
  - Do you truly love the Lord?
  - If the answer it yes.
  - Don't just say it, show it by your life.
  - Trust the Lord with your obedience.

- There are many of you here, and you are faithfully living for the Lord.
  - You are seeking the Lord with all your heart.
  - And I want to encourage you, keep going.

- This past week, during our staff meeting, I asked each of our staff members what was most challenging and what was most encouraging in their ministries.
  - Do you know what they all said was their greatest encouragement?
  - They said it was their volunteers.

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    - They were all saying how they were so grateful for faithful people, giving themselves to Christ.
    - And I just want say, keep going Christian brother and sister.
    - Keep trusting and serving the Lord.

- But there may be others here, and it may be you're in a season when you feel tired.
    - It may be you're feeling a lack of motivation.
    - Perhaps you feel frustrated by what is happening around you.
    - Perhaps you feel like giving up.

- But I want to encourage you, don't give up.
    - Rather, keep holding on to Christ.
    - Keep trusting the Lord.
    - Trust him with your disappointments.
    - Trust him with your family and relationships.
    - Trust him with your obedience.
    - And you'll see that you were able to hold on to Christ, because he was holding on to you.

- When I fear my faith will fail
  Christ will hold me fast
  When the tempter would prevail
  He will hold me fast
  I could never keep my hold
  Through life's fearful path
  For my love is often cold
  He must hold me fast

- He will hold me fast
  He will hold me fast
  For my Savior loves me so
  He will hold me fast