

00-06-25a

Let's begin our worship this morning by going to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege we have of enjoying the many blessings that you bestow on us, the wonderful provision that you make for us, you provide for us and care for us in ways that we do not even comprehend. We take so many things for granted.

We are sustained in so many invisible ways as well as visible ways. There are unseen disasters and unseen calamities that you protect us from. You provide for us a window of blessing and an environment of opportunity each and every day.

We thank you for the mercies that are renewed every morning. We thank you for the faithfulness of our Savior who sits at your right hand and intercedes for us. We thank you for the ministry of your Spirit who comforts us, who guides us, who corrects, rebukes and instructs us through the agency of your Word that is resident in our souls.

We thank you for the country in which we live, the physical environment that grants us the freedom and the opportunity to spend time dedicated to the study of your Word and to meditation on the truth. We thank you that we not only have an environment in which we can learn, but also an environment in which we can live and grow and be productive. We pray that as we worship together this morning, as our souls are fed and nourished through the supernatural power of your Word, that God the Holy Spirit will enable and empower each one of us.

We pray that the things that we see in your Word will become a permanent part of the resources in our souls so that we can be transformed, so that we can be renewed, so that divine power will produce its work within us and we will be fruitful fields, fruitful vineyards bearing an eternal harvest. We pray these things in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

For our scripture reading this morning, I'd like to turn to Leviticus chapter 25. Leviticus chapter 25. This is a long chapter and we're going to read the center section beginning at verse 23.

And this might seem an odd place to come for scripture reading, but our subject this morning has to do with biblical charity. What should our attitude be toward those in need? This is central to our study as we come to the close of the book of Genesis and we see that Jacob and his family in Canaan are those who are in need. God has provided for them through pre-positioning Joseph in the land and having gone through his career as a slave and rising to become the vizier of Egypt.

God made provision for his people in the land of Canaan to come down and dwell in Egypt. Not only is Jacob provided for and blessed, but so are the Egyptians and peoples from all the surrounding regions. God provides for the poor.

God makes provision for those who are in need. The Israelites as the people of God, we as believers in the church age who are the people of God need to understand the divine principles of giving, the divine principles of charity. To what extent should we give materially, provide materially for the needs of those who are lacking, those who are in need? What are the principles that guide us? Should we give to everyone who holds up a cardboard sign? What should we vote for in terms of our country's sustaining of the poor? The various government programs and subsidies and so forth that provide for those who have fallen on hard times or those who are out of work and so on.

Well, we have touched on this subject in the past. This is a very central passage. We're going to see an entire chapter that talks about Joseph's dealings not only with his own family, but also with those who are in need in the land of Egypt during this time of famine.

So this is particularly apropos. And we find in the Law of Moses, which will come 400 odd years after Joseph's time, God's prescription for the nation of Israel in dealing with the poor. There are a number of passages that we'll visit this morning, but this is one of the central passages found in Leviticus chapter 25.

He has already covered in the first 22 verses the principle of the Sabbath year. Not only did they have a seven-day week, but they had a cycle of seven years. Six years they were to sow the land, reap the land, and then let the land lay fallow in the seventh year.

Give the land its rest. And the question might come, well, what about our food and our means of income during that seventh year? Well, God told them in verse 21, after they asked that question in verse 20, if you say, what shall we eat in the seventh year since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce? Verse 21, I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. Why would you need three years worth? Well, you need the produce for that year, the sixth year, plus you need provision for the seventh year, and because you do not sow or reap in the seventh year, you're not going to have seed grain for the first year of the next seven-year cycle.

So, you need a three-fold harvest. And what I find fascinating about this is, if you think about the parable of the soils that Jesus gives in Matthew and in Mark, Luke, he doesn't talk about this in that account of the parable, but in Matthew and Mark, Jesus talks about the fact that there are 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold fields. And when you think about the fact that a 100-fold field has produced over three times the amount that the 30-fold field has, one of the benefits of that is that that sustains not only for the present, but also for the future.

God says, I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and your fields will produce three-fold. So, the field that is under God's blessing in the sixth year is going to produce not only for the present, but also for that year where there is no sowing or

reaping, and for the following year when you need seed grain to plant so that you can harvest and have food for the second year. So, it's an interesting thing to connect in our minds that the field upon which God's blessing rests is capable of producing three-fold.

And that, of course, should be our goal as spiritual fields. Then in verse 22 he goes on to say, You shall sow in the eighth year and eat old produce until the ninth year. Until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

This is a reminder to us that we often have opportunities in our lives. We have periods of months or years where we are able to take in the word of God. We're able to meditate on it and apply it.

We sometimes find ourselves in situations where it isn't possible to listen to a tape or to even attend a fellowship in the military. A lot of us that have had to move around and be stationed overseas for a year is not likely to be a good, strong church fellowship where there is teaching of the word of God that can sustain your soul and so forth. Many times we find ourselves geographically located or under circumstances that don't permit us to spend the time we would like to in sowing the seed of the word into our souls.

But we do have the opportunity to eat of the old harvest. God knew ahead of time that we might have those lean times, those lean years. Or it may be a time where we are to rest from sowing and reaping and subsist on the old harvest.

Do we have the word of God in our souls? Can we pull it out of the storehouse? Jesus said that a faithful teacher of the law will bring out of the storehouse things both new and old. I know in times past, I and many others used to think that you measure your spiritual health by how often you take in the word of God. But the real measure of spiritual health is have we stored up? Do we have things in our soul? If you find yourself in the waiting room for an hour, you have a choice.

You can pick up a People magazine and read about the entertainment industry or you can sit and reflect and pull something from the old harvest out of your soul and meditate on it. Many of us commute or have long drives from time to time. What do we think about during those times? Again, the military is famous for hurry up and wait.

You can sit or stand or be in formation for long periods of time. We can redeem that time. We can make use of it by reaching into the storehouse and pulling out from the old harvest.

That's what sustains our souls. That's what keeps the word of God fresh. It produces fresh questions and fresh areas of investigation.

We can meditate on the application of those things in different areas of our life. Are we being faithful? Are we in the faith? Are we a fruitful field? Then in verse 23 where our actual scripture reading picks up this morning, God tells the Israelites, The land shall not

be sold permanently for the land is mine. You are strangers and sojourners with me.

And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land. If one of your brethren becomes poor and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. So someone falls on hard times.

They have some property. They sell that property to another Israelite. And then someone from the family comes and says, I'd like to buy back Joab's field that he sold you two years ago when he was hard-pressed to sustain his family.

Well, you are required to sell that field back to the family because that was land that had been assigned to that tribe, to that clan, to that family. And even though it has been mortgaged, if you will, it is redeemable. And so this was actually sort of a system of mortgage.

You could mortgage the land. You could actually lease out the land in a sense. But it was always to be returned to that family if they were able to redeem it, if they were able to purchase it back.

Verse 26, If the man has no one to redeem it but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it that he may return to his possession. And when he says count the years, this is the remaining time between the time that it was sold and the year of Jubilee, which was supposed to come every 50 years in Israel. So if it was halfway through the cycle of Jubilee and there were 25 years, maybe he sold his land and five years later he's able to come back and redeem it, then he would prorate the value of the land because the person who bought it had been able to use it for five years.

And so he would prorate the price based on the time to the year of Jubilee and be returned in terms of owning that possession. Verse 28, But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the year of Jubilee, and in the Jubilee it shall be released and he shall return to his possession. If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold.

Within a full year he may redeem it. But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it. Throughout his generations it shall not be released in the Jubilee.

However, the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed and they shall be released in the Jubilee. I wish we had time to spend talking about the difference between a field and a walled city, but I will just suggest to you our memory verse from Psalm 91.

In the spiritual connotation of this, if you are able to enter the secret place of the Most High and abide in the shadow of the Almighty, there are countless passages in the Psalms that talk about the fact that God is our refuge. God is our strength, our shield. He is our walled city.

And if you reach the place, you had to be pretty well off to purchase a house in town because it was the greatest place of security. If invaders come, if hard times hit the land, where is the safest place? It is in a walled city. Where did all of the Canaanites flee when Israel crossed the Jordan? They went into the walled cities of Jericho and so forth.

So, to be the possessor of a house in a walled city was a rare and precious thing. Not something to be given up lightly. And if you sold your house in the walled city, you had one year to come back and redeem it.

And if you didn't, you lost it permanently. And if you were not wise and prudent enough to be able to manage your affairs and keep hold of that property, you could lose it. And once you lost it, you couldn't go back and redeem it later.

It was not a perpetual possession. How did you get to the place of being rich enough to buy a house in the walled city? Well, you had to start from scratch. You had your land, you sowed your fields, you were careful, you were prudent.

Over the years, you built up your goods and your riches to the point where you could buy that house in the walled city. The fields and the opportunity to sow and to sustain yourself and to set something by and become well off are always redeemable. You can always go back and get that back.

It's a perpetual inheritance. But the walled cities were a special case. There weren't very many people who could afford to do that.

And if they did and if they messed it up and couldn't redeem it within a year, they could lose it permanently and have to start all over. They'd have to go back and they didn't have the privilege of regaining what they had lost. They had to start from scratch and build all the way back up.

And there are some great principles there of spiritual maturity. Entering the walled city in some ways is like entering the land of Canaan in terms of being a picture of maturity. This is one of the reasons why discipline on pastors is different than discipline on members of a congregation.

Why is it that it is a wrong thing, for example, for a prominent Baptist pastor who has divorced his wife to continue in the pulpit? We don't penalize members of a congregation biblically if they experience a divorce, but it doesn't matter if it's a legitimate divorce or an illegitimate divorce, especially when you have stated publicly that if you divorce, you will not remain in the pulpit, and then to conclude the divorce and go back on your word.

It's no different than the president or anyone else saying something in public and then going back on it. And we have that case going on at present in the Southern Baptist denomination.

And it's a shameful thing. If you understand the Word of God, if you understand the principles that a pastor reflects as an example, as an object lesson, one of the reasons God puts such a high standard of behavior on pastors is that their life is a nonverbal witness. And it is a communication.

And the pastors who forget that will stand before the judgment and bear double discipline, as the Bible teaches. So that's why we have this section about the walled city. That's why the walled city is different, because to prosper and to be blessed with wisdom and material goods to the point of being able to be a house owner in the walled city, that is something you've got to safeguard.

It can be lost, and it can be lost permanently. And not to say that you can't go back and start over, and over the long period of time eventually build back up and gain enough of a fortune to buy another house in the walled city, but that's not what the Bible envisions here. The picture is you need to have enduring faith.

You need to guard those things that you have, because from those to whom much is given, much is required. So it also talks about, in verse 32 here, the cities of the Levites and the houses in the cities of their possession the Levites may redeem at any time. They have the privileges of the priesthood.

And there's a lot we could say about our privileges as believer priests united with Christ in the Melchizedekian priesthood. If a man purchases a house from the Levites, that house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee, for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. But the field of common land of their cities may not be sold, it is their perpetual possession.

So there's a privilege that is granted to the Levites that's different than the Israelites. Look at verse 35 of Leviticus 25. If one of your brethren becomes poor and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him.

It doesn't say you can help him, it says you shall help him. Like a stranger or a sojourner, so that he may live with you. Take no usury or interest from him, but fear your God that your brother may live with you.

You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God. If one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave.

As a hired servant and as a sojourner, he shall be with you and shall serve you until the

year of Jubilee. Now what's the difference between a hired servant and a slave? A hired servant is a contract worker. A hired servant is someone who comes in, the laborer is worthy of his hire.

There is recompense. They labor and they're recompensed for their labor. That is the way that indentured service was to be accomplished in Israel, between Israelites.

They could indenture themselves, they could be paid a sum of money, and in return serve. So they could do contract labor for one another and be a hired servant. But they were not a slave in the sense of the slaves from the foreign lands that were conquered militarily and were not recompensed.

This is a matter of viewpoint. How do you view an Israelite who has sold himself to you? You treat him as, you know, there's just implied a greater degree of respect. This is an autonomous person who is selling their services to you in exchange for money or grain or whatever the arrangement might be.

But he's still considered to be independent. He's treated with a different level of respect than someone who has been enslaved because of military conquest or who has been purchased from outside the land. So as a hired servant and a sojourner, he shall be with you and shall serve you until the year of Jubilee.

Then he shall depart from you, he and his children with him, and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. All debts are canceled.

All goods are returned in the year of Jubilee. For they are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as slaves.

You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. This is the difference in viewpoint. Israelites were free to rule over their slaves with rigor.

The Bible doesn't set the same level of treatment for slaves that came from outside Israel. Verse 44, As for your male and female slaves whom you may have from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. Now this is very uncomfortable for the whole anti-slavery movement and so forth.

It's interesting to watch the contortions of people who are anxious to put themselves back under the law of Moses in a lot of different ways, but they don't ever want to acknowledge this part of the law of Moses. Even the Adventists and lots of others who want to live under the law don't really cotton to this part of it, if I can use that phrase. From them you may buy male and female slaves.

Moreover, you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land, and they shall become your property. Ooh, there's some politically incorrect scripture. You may take them as an

inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession.

They shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor. Now, if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold, he may be redeemed again.

One of his brothers may redeem him. Or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him. Or anyone who is near or akin to him in his family may redeem him.

Or if he is able, he may redeem himself. Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him. The price of his release shall be according to the number of years from the year that he was sold to him until the year of Jubilee.

It shall be according to the time of a hired servant for him. In other words, the closer you get to the year of Jubilee, the smaller the price would have to be because he's going to be freed in the year of Jubilee anyway. If there are still many years remaining, according to them, he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought.

If there remain but a few years until the year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, and according to his years, he shall repay him the price of his redemption. He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. In other words, a stranger or sojourner that purchased a fellow Israelite, if he starts abusing him and treating him as a slave instead of a hired servant, they can go in and do something about it.

If he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall be released in the year of Jubilee, he and his children with him. For the children of Israel are servants to me. They are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt.

I am the Lord your God. Well, the principle, you know, we have a process that we go through in studying the Word of God. I saw an email recently where someone was talking about how bigoted and unfair Christians are in their view of homosexuality.

And, you know, when you think about that lifestyle, you go to the Scriptures and God says it's an abomination, it's worthy of the death penalty in Israel. Then people say, well, the Christians are quick to pull those Scriptures out, but they don't go to other parts of the law. And then they go to other parts of the law of Moses and pull things out where a teenager who sasses his parents can be stoned and many other things that they find to be patently ridiculous and that believers don't follow in this age.

And they say, well, you're just picking and choosing and you're not being consistent. One of the principles that is overlooked in that view is that we go through a process of

interpreting the Scripture. We observe, we interpret, and then we apply.

And to make a superficial analysis like that and say, well, how come you're not staying outside the camp seven days when you touch something dead, and why are you eating bacon and all these other things, is to take a very simplistic view of Scripture. And when we go through that process of observation, interpretation, and application, we come to passages like this. Should we advocate slavery and return to 1840s America? Not necessarily.

We observe these passages. We see what God dictated for the nation of Israel in the ancient world when they were surrounded by Canaanites and pagan peoples. God was making a point about the difference between believers and unbelievers.

It doesn't talk about an Israelite of faith or someone who's faithful in offering their sacrifices, does it? It says if he is an Israelite by birth, he is considered to be God's. He belongs to God. This goes back to our previous studies where for the purposes of illustration and for the purposes of instruction, the nation of Israel is treated as a nation of believers.

And there is a distinction. There's a distinction in God's mind. The Israelites have been purchased.

They have been redeemed. They belong to God. He says, I brought you out of Israel.

I took you out of the slavery of Egypt, and now you belong to me. And because of being God's possession, they have privileges that don't pertain to those who are outside. Now, does this mean that if you're a Hivite or a Moabite, you're just hopeless, helpless, and useless? Not at all.

There was provision to become an Israelite. You could be a proselyte and come into the fold. The first example that pops into my mind is Uriah the Hittite.

Hittites are not Israelites, but Uriah enjoyed the full privileges of an Israelite because he came to the land and said, I want to associate myself with the people of God. He was an honorable man. He would not go home and enjoy the pleasures of his household and his wife's company while the armies of Israel were out in battle, which was a higher standard of integrity than King David himself was observing at that time.

He was a man of honor. He was a man who came to God and came to the people of God and joined himself to them. Did Uriah enjoy all of the privileges that belong to an Israelite in passages such as this? Yes, he did.

He was not a stranger or a sojourner any longer. He had joined himself. He had entered into the same covenant relationship with God that all of these other Israelites enjoyed.

And you will see many instances of both men and women in Scripture, Ruth, Rahab, and many others who came and joined themselves to the nation of Israel. And that brought to them the blessings of the covenant and the blessings of identity and belonging to the Lord Jesus. There were others who just associated themselves.

They were still strangers and sojourners. They might be merchants. They might be brokers for outside entities in other countries who had caravans running back and forth.

They might be dwelling in the land, but they didn't subscribe to the law of Moses. They didn't consider themselves to be Israelites any more than you have lots of people from the Middle East and other foreign countries who dwell in the United States on work visas or passports or whatever, and they don't consider themselves to be Americans. A lot of them have no desire to become an American.

They just want to come over here and take all our money, buy our land and buildings and establish businesses here and scoop their share out of the great economy. Well, let's return now over to Genesis where we resume our study this morning in chapter 47 because we're going to see these principles introduced in terms of biblical chronology. This is the first place where we really have an extended view of biblical charity.

How do you deal with those who are in need? We saw where Joseph introduced his five brothers in verse 2 of chapter 47. Five men from among his brothers had presented them to Pharaoh. Jewish tradition holds that these were the five least impressive brothers like Issachar and some of them because the tradition says Joseph was afraid that Pharaoh might see his mighty brothers like Judah and Reuben and Simeon and decide to enlist them in the army or something.

So he brought the weakest and least impressive brothers. But that's completely fabricated. There's no biblical evidence for that.

It just says that he brought five. This led us last week to our study of the number five and its association with Egypt in particular and with humanity in general. And so Joseph had already coached his brothers at the end of chapter 46 when he told them in verse 31, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My brothers and those of my father's house who were in the land of Canaan have come to me.

The men are shepherds. Their occupation has been to feed livestock. They have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.

So it shall be when Pharaoh calls you and says, What is your occupation? You shall say, Your servant's occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and our fathers, so that you may dwell in the land of Goshen. Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians. With all the study that's been done in Egyptology, nobody has been able to quite find any documentation that Egyptians considered shepherds or

herdsmen to be an abomination or a lower class.

It's somewhat puzzling what Joseph meant by this until you get to the next chapter. Because when Joseph goes and tells Pharaoh and says, My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess have come from the land of Canaan. Remember, Pharaoh said, Don't even bother to bring your possessions because we'll give you anything you want from the land of Egypt.

But Jacob brought everything. His sons brought all of their possessions, particularly their flocks and their herds. And when they stand before Pharaoh, and Pharaoh asks them, just as Joseph knew he would, in verse 3, What is your occupation? They said to Pharaoh, Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers.

They said to Pharaoh, We have come to dwell in the land because your servants have no pastor for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen. This accomplishes two things.

First of all, the brothers and the father of Joseph are not coming down to Egypt to live on the dole. They don't come down empty-handed and avail themselves of outright charity in terms of a complete free ride. They bring everything they have.

The means that they need to sustain themselves are their flocks and their herds. That's where they get their leather, their milk, their meat. The one thing they don't have in Canaan because of the famine is pasturage.

And all they are asking for is pasturage. So that's the first thing. They are looking for the means to sustain themselves, not a place to be sustained by others.

Secondly, Joseph ensures, because we know that they could also sow and reap grain, but Joseph ensures that they are kept separate. They are going to be in the land of Egypt, but by dwelling in the land of Goshen, they are going to have their own place and they are not going to intermingle. They are not going to intermarry with the Egyptians.

They are not going to join themselves and become one people. They are not going to be dispersed like a great melting pot and lost in terms of their patriarchal identity and their future national identity. They are not going to be intermingled with the Egyptians.

They are going to be kept separate. Joseph says, I want you to identify yourself with something that is an abomination to the Egyptians. That will keep you separate.

They won't want to intermingle with you. Because we know that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not only herdsmen, but also agricultural czars. They were merchants.

We know that Jacob, some of the things he sent down to Egypt, dates and spices and lots of other things, because they were able to buy and sell and trade and be merchantmen.

But Joseph says, identify yourselves as herdsmen. Because this is something that the Egyptians contract out.

They don't do it themselves. They consider it beneath them. It's an abomination.

This will keep you separate. So two things. It's not a handout.

It is the means of sustaining themselves. And secondly, it is provision, but it is not compromise. They're not going to be intermingled.

They're going to continue to maintain their own identity. So in verse 5, Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you.

Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land. Let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.

This is a means of earning the right to graze their herds and flocks in Goshen. They will also herd and graze the flocks and animals that belong to Pharaoh. So they're earning this.

In exchange for pasturing their flocks in Goshen, they will work for Pharaoh and take care of his animals as well. So although they could easily have taken outright handout, they don't do so. So verse 7, Joseph brought in his father Jacob, set him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

This officially was probably an interview with Pharaoh. Jacob is granted an interview with Pharaoh. That's probably how the Egyptians looked at it.

But scripturally, this is really Pharaoh's interview with Jacob. As Jacob is brought in and set before Pharaoh, Jacob blesses Pharaoh there in verse 7. Pharaoh says to Jacob, How old are you? Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage, my sojourn, are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life.

They have not attained the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourn, the days of their pilgrimage. So Jacob already feels like he's pretty close to death. And at this time, he's only 130 years old.

Remember, Abraham lived to be how old? I think 180. And Isaac, I think, was 160, 165. I've forgotten the exact number.

But Jacob here is only 130. He's going to actually live 17 more years from this point. But like Isaac, he's sort of prematurely anticipating his own death.

And he's acting as though his life is over at this point. Few and evil have been the days

of the years of my life. Why would Jacob say such a thing? Few and evil have the years of the days of my life been.

Or the days of the years of my life, actually. Well, think about his experience. He was prosperous as a youth in his father's camp until he crossed and double-crossed his brother.

And then he fled with only the clothes on his back and went north and served in an indentured capacity, much as we read earlier this morning, for Laban for some 40 years. So this is roughly a third of Jacob's life. And now for the remaining 17 years of his life, he's going to be serving to pay for the right to pasture his flocks down in Goshen.

He'll be serving Pharaoh in that sense. So for fully a third of his life, he is serving others. For fully a third of his life, he's been outside the land that was promised to his fathers and to him as a perpetual inheritance.

And in that sense, and of course even when he was in the land, he suffered loss. He had the loss of grandsons. He had disappointment in his own sons who murdered and pillaged and sold their own brother into slavery, who were unfaithful and a disappointment to him.

He had to send his youngest son to watch them because they were untrustworthy. And he lost the wife that he loved. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin.

So in terms of fulfillment and blessing, that is yet future for Jacob. His sojourn, largely due to his own lack of faith in God in some cases, his days have been relatively evil. They've not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers and the days of their pilgrimage.

Then in verse 10, Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from before Pharaoh. Notice in verse 7 and in verse 10, it is said that Jacob blessed Pharaoh. If you turn back to when Jacob himself received the blessing, remember when Isaac thought he was blessing Esau.

And in chapter 27, after dressing himself up as Esau and so forth, verse 27, he came near, kissed him, smelled the smell of his clothing, blessed him and said, The smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed. The blessed field that's going to be productive and produce 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold. Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, plenty of grain and wine.

Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren. Let your mother's sons bow down to you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you. And blessed be those who bless you. Pharaoh is blessing Jacob by providing for him, giving him the best of the land of Egypt, allowing

him to pastor his flocks in Goshen.

And Jacob is blessing Pharaoh. In fact, he gives him a double blessing. He blesses him at the beginning and he blesses him at the end.

The nation of Egypt receives a double blessing for their kindness to Jacob. And I'll just point out here that we talked about the number five being associated with Egypt, being associated with the peoples. I will bless those who bless you.

I will curse those who curse you, God says. Egypt received a double blessing for blessing Jacob and his sons. What's going to happen a few hundred years hence when the Pharaoh who knows not Joseph and the later rulers of Egypt and the people of Egypt curse Israel? Why are there ten plagues on the land of Egypt? Ten is two times five, isn't it? Double blessing, double cursing.

I believe that the reason God wrought ten plagues upon the land of Egypt is because it's double five. And it is a reminder to them that by cursing Jacob, they have brought a double curse on themselves, even in the way that by blessing Jacob, they brought a double blessing on themselves. Well, this is where we need to pause now and take our break.

Those who bless the poor will themselves be blessed. That's our responsibility, just as it's been a responsibility of believers in every age. And that's where we'll resume when we come back from our break.