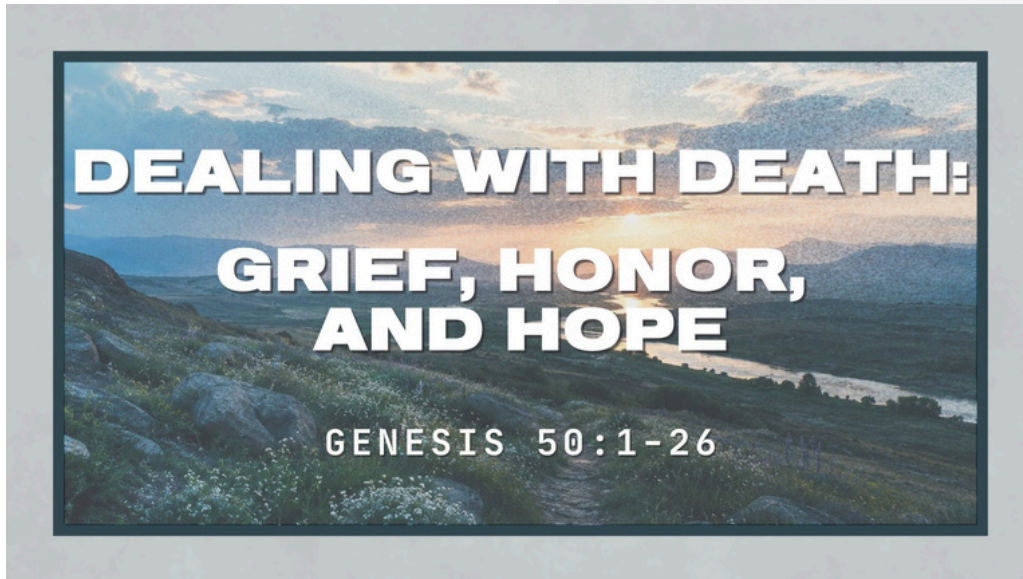


CCLEB SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY MAY 31, 2026
GENESIS 50:1-26

PASTOR DUANE MILLER

DEALING WITH DEATH: GRIEF, HONOR, AND HOPE

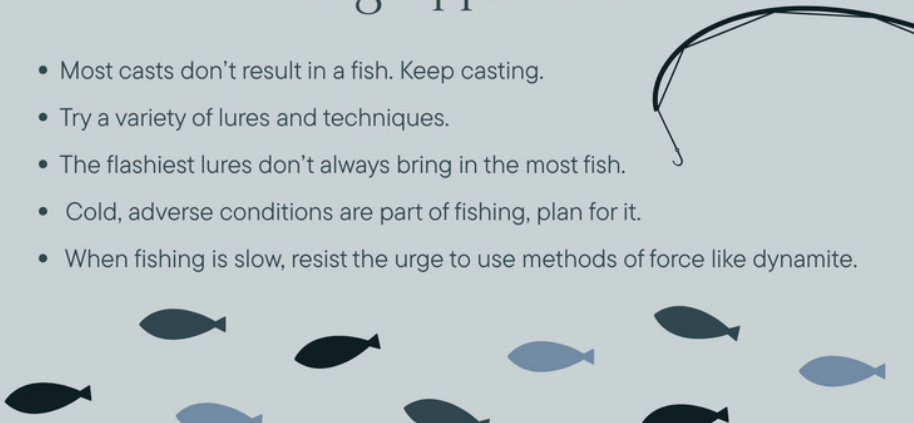


It is good to be with you today. I miss you when I am away. Last Sunday I was here fishing – and now I'm back being a fisher of men!

As I reflected on that trip, I was reminded of a few things that apply both to fishing for fish and fishing for men.

Fishing Applications

- Most casts don't result in a fish. Keep casting.
- Try a variety of lures and techniques.
- The flashiest lures don't always bring in the most fish.
- Cold, adverse conditions are part of fishing, plan for it.
- When fishing is slow, resist the urge to use methods of force like dynamite.



And that has almost nothing to do with our chapter today. There are more fishing-for-men applications in the bonus content of the teaching notes online.

This past Monday we observed Memorial Day and remembered those who died for our country.

Death makes us pause. It pushes us into grief. Part of grief is learning how to honor the dead, and part of grief is learning where to find hope.

As we wrap up Genesis, we come to two deaths, and we will focus on grief, honor, and hope.

I remember when Princess Diana died in 1997. The funeral received full television coverage—it was quite an event.

Reports said more than two million mourners lined the streets of London, and around two billion people watched live. Cameras panned across somber faces and many tears.



People were drawn to Princess Diana. Many felt they knew her because she showed emotion publicly and did extraordinary acts of kindness, like hugging AIDS patients in a time of stigma and fear. Though she was royalty, many felt she was one of us—a symbol of warmth, compassion, empathy, and hope.

In that season of grief, crowds brought flowers and tributes to public places. In that way they grieved her death and honored her life. But where was the hope? For many, Diana herself had been their hope—and then she was gone.

Genesis ends with two deaths—Jacob, the last patriarch, and then his son Joseph. Jacob’s death also brings a massive funeral procession. In this chapter we see both grief and honor for the dead. But unlike Diana’s death, Joseph’s death leaves us with genuine hope.

Let’s look at these deaths. In the last verse of **Genesis 49**, Jacob “breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death.” Then in **Genesis 50:1 NASB** we see Joseph’s immediate response. Notice the three highlighted words: “fell, wept, kissed.”

By this point in Joseph’s story, we are familiar with his tears. He wept when he saw his brothers (**Genesis 42-43**), and Joseph fell on Benjamin’s neck, wept, and kissed his brothers—the same three words fell, wept, kissed (**Genesis 45**)—and does that again when he saw his father after twenty-two years (**Genesis 46**).

Joseph gives us a beautiful picture: a wise interpreter of dreams, a powerful ruler over Egypt, and yet a man who feels grief deeply. He falls on the necks of those he loves, weeps, and kisses them. Strength and tenderness live together in him.

Notice in **Genesis 50:1** that when Jacob dies, Joseph says nothing. There are no words—only visible grief.

Is Joseph’s grief uncomfortable for you? Many of us do not grieve well because we were never shown how. Here Joseph shows us how to grieve. Parents, model grieving for your children.

There are other reasons we do not grieve well. We may have believed lies about grief, like “real men don’t cry.” But Joseph was the second most powerful man in Egypt, and from a biblical perspective a type of Christ—and Joseph cried.

We also may have believed lies like “emotions are bad and cannot be trusted.” No – emotions are God-given. God wants us to embrace emotions, learn from them, and grow in mastery of them as the gift they are.

And lastly, we may not have grown up in a place where it was safe to grieve. I have heard many adults say they never saw their parents’ cry. Joseph created a safe environment for grief by grieving publicly and regularly.

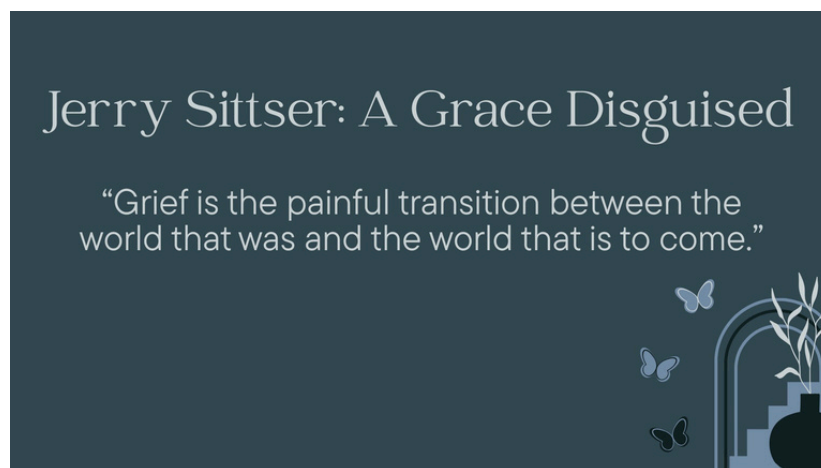
To me, grief is a gift from God. It is the process he gives us to walk through loss in a way that is healing and helps us keep living in his grace and love. When I walk into those painful places of loss, I often find God waiting for me there in the center of my pain.

We know that was true for the apostle Paul. In **2 Corinthians 1:3** he describes God as “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” Paul would only speak that way if he had personally experienced God the Father as merciful and comforting.

I want to encourage you to lean into grieving. Grief is of God, and it is helpful. Here are a few resources that can help.



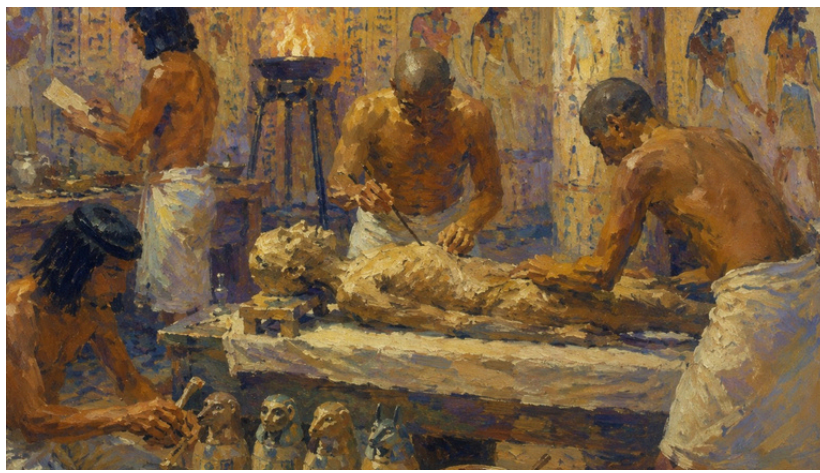
in his memoir on grief, *A Grace Disguised*, writes: “Grief is the painful transition between the world that was and the world that is to come.” That is helpful. God leads us into the world without what we lost, and the pathway for new world is grief.



In **Genesis 50:1** we see Joseph grieving. In **verse 2** we see him continue that process by honoring the dead, our second point.

Let’s read how he honors the dead in **verses 2-3**.

In **verse 2**, Joseph orders that his father be embalmed. This was an act of honor. Embalming was expensive and usually reserved for royalty. For the Egyptians it was tied to Osiris and beliefs about the afterlife.



Jacob was not Egyptian, yet he was embalmed. And in **verse 26**, when Joseph dies, Joseph is embalmed as well. In death, both Jacob and Joseph are treated like royalty. This is one way Joseph honors his father. But later in the chapter we see clearly that their hope for the afterlife is not in Osiris, but in God.

Verse 4-13. Joseph also honors his father by doing exactly what Jacob asked. Back in **Genesis 47**, Jacob made Joseph swear that he would bury him in Canaan, not in Egypt.

Of course, Joseph needed Pharaoh's permission to leave the country. In **verse 4**, many ask why Joseph speaks through Pharaoh's advisors instead of speaking directly to Pharaoh. One likely reason is that Joseph was in a formal period of mourning and may not have been considered presentable for Pharaoh's court.

In **verse 7-9**, we see a huge entourage traveling from Egypt go to Canaan—a full funeral procession. It included Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, the elders of Egypt, Joseph's brothers, and chariots. Picture a massive company with all the people, support, and provisions needed for a journey of two to three weeks.

The Hebrew description of this in **verse 9** carries the sense of something socially impressive, visually overwhelming, immense, and imposing.

Think about this through the lens of honor. Look at how much honor Jacob receives. And it all begins with Joseph honoring his father's request to be buried in Canaan. Honor produced even more honor.

Interestingly, this procession did not take the usual coastal route into Canaan from the southwest. Instead, it approached from the southeast. The text does not explain why, but 400 years later Israel would also enter the Promised Land from the southeast and crossing the Jordan.

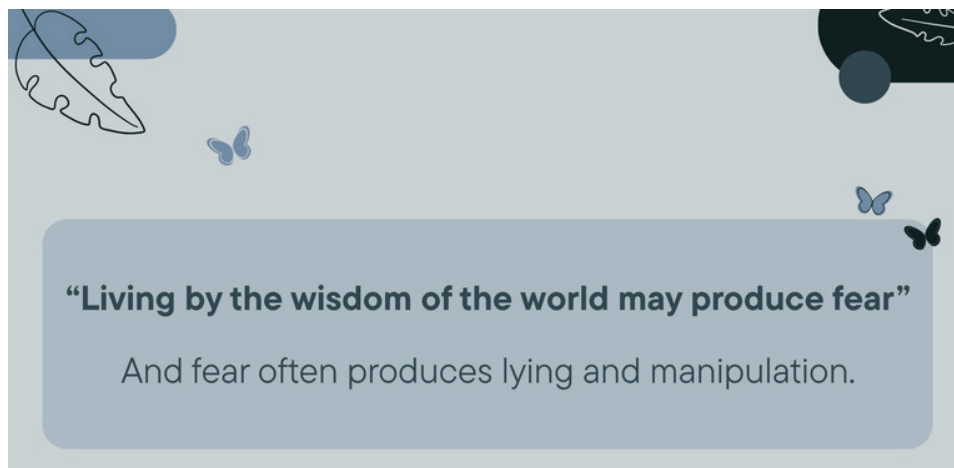


When Jacob's funeral procession crossed the Jordan, it came to the "threshing floor of Atad," meaning "the threshing floor of the thorn."

A threshing floor is a place of separation, a symbol of judgement, and the thorn points back to the curse in **Genesis 3**. Some see this as a foreshadowing of how Israel would later enter the land after a long season of judgment and hardship.

Verse 14-15. With Jacob dead and the family back in Egypt, the brothers fear that Joseph may finally take revenge. In the world they lived in, that fear made sense. Honor killings were common and expected.

But this covenant family was called to live differently. Because the brothers were thinking according to the wisdom of the world, they lived in fear instead of faith. Here is one practical truth: Living by the wisdom of the world may produce fear. And fear often produces lying and manipulation, as we see in **verses 16-17**.

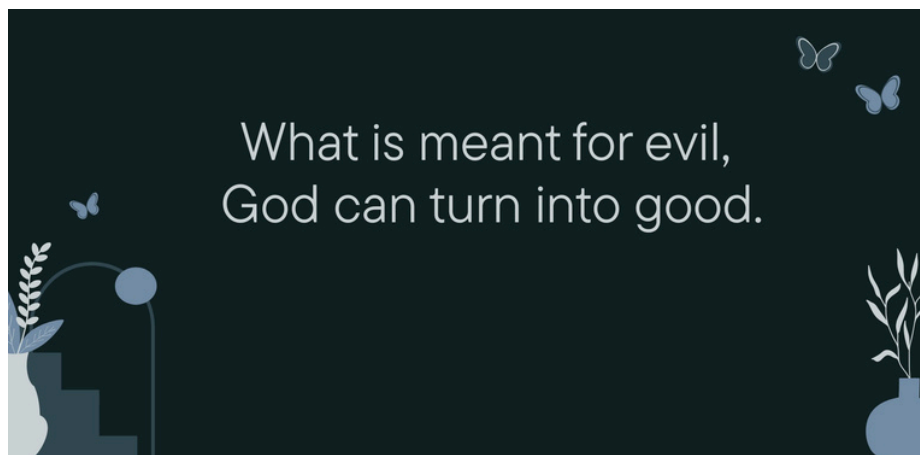


And the brothers even go so far in their lying and manipulation as to call themselves “the servants of the God of your father”. Since when are these brothers the servants of God? Has there been any evidence of that? This fear-driven charade grieves Joseph deeply, so he does what Joseph often does—he weeps. Can you imagine how painful it was for him to see his brothers still bound up in fear? They had the same opportunity Joseph had: to trust the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But instead, they trusted their own lies. So, Joseph wept.

Then in **verse 18** the brothers bow to him again, this time in fear, pleading for their lives. Joseph’s dream in **Genesis 37** had been fulfilled many times already, but this moment had to be especially painful.

Joseph then in **verse 19** reminds his brothers that they are the covenant family of God and they are to think differently. He says these astounding words to them. Joseph rightly sees himself as not God. Vengeance and final justice are not his to deliver. This is radical kingdom thinking, and Joseph models it beautifully.

Joseph continues in **verse 20 NASB**. Notice the “evil” and the “good” in **verse 20**. These echo the categories we saw earlier in **Genesis 1-2**. The main point is this: though humans bring evil, divine providence brings preservation of life—which is good. What the brothers meant for evil, God turned for good.



This points us to the cross. The evil intended by Rome and the religious leaders became the very event God used to bring salvation to the world. What man meant for evil, God meant for good.

Romans 8:28 takes this one step further. The phrase “causes everything to work together for good” carries the idea of God repurposing. To explain repurposing, the prophets Isaiah and Micah even picture weapons of war being repurposed into tools that cultivate life. That’s repurposing.



So when evil happens—and many of you have experienced real evil—if we surrender that evil to God, He can repurpose it in a way that makes us more like Jesus. **Romans 8:29**

And as God makes you more like Jesus through repurposing evil, he will use that transformation to bring good to other hurting people.

Some of you need to grieve the evil done against you before you can fully surrender it to God. I know personally how that works. Grief can help bring you to the place of surrender, where God begins his beautiful work of repurposing. Pray about that.

Now look how much Joseph, who had evil done against him, sounds like Jesus in **verse 21**. Do those words and actions look like Jesus? What man meant for evil, God meant for good.

So far, in relation to death and loss, we have talked about grief and honor. Now let’s finish with hope. **Verse 22-25**.

Joseph stares at his own death in the face and puts his hope in God. He says, “God will surely come to help you and lead you out.” That is hope.

Verse 26. The book of Genesis ends, the last verse of the whole book, ends with Joseph dead in a coffin.

Here are some thoughts for your meditation and application.

In today’s passage we saw Joseph’s brothers living by the wisdom of the world instead of trusting God. And we learned this: living by the wisdom of the world may produce fear, and fear often produces lying and manipulation. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph wants us to trust him and trust his covenant promises.

We also saw that what the brothers meant for evil, God in his providence used for good. And that can be true in our lives too, if we surrender the wrongs done against us to him. God can repurpose them and make us more like Christ, for his good and for his glory.

But we also saw two deaths in this chapter—Jacob buried in Canaan, and Joseph in a coffin. In dealing with death, we must grieve. In that grief, we can honor the dead. But we also need hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Grieve with hope. When my brother died suddenly in October of '24, I grieved—and I am still grieving. But I grieve with hope. I know he is with Jesus, and I know I will see him again.

I have a neighbor named Larry who is near death and refuses Jesus. If he passes still without Jesus, I will grieve differently—without hope. It will be a darker, heavier kind of grief.

Where does your hope lie? Does your hope lie in the same God that Joseph was convinced “would surely come to help you and lead you?”

Hope is what pulls you through grief. Grief is long and complicated. It comes in waves, often without warning. At times it can feel suffocating and stir up raw expressions of emotion.

But hope is a steady beacon in the future that never grows dim. Hope shines brightly, but we must keep our faces turned toward it. Is your face turned toward the one whose resurrection conquers death and offers eternal life?

The book of Genesis opens with the Spirit hovering over the water bringing order and life **Genesis 1:2**. The book of Genesis ends with Joseph dead in a coffin **Genesis 50:26**. Two radically different pictures- and the pictures tell us something.



If there is going to be hope, as Joseph says, where does that hope come from—the hope that God “will surely come to help you and lead you”? **Romans 1:4** shows us that hope, and it comes through death and the Spirit.

Romans 1:4. Jesus was dead, just like Joseph. But the same Spirit we saw at the beginning of Genesis raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus is our hope. He is the one who, as Joseph said, “helps us and leads us”. Amen?

BONUS

CONTENT:

More fishing for fish / “fishing for men” applications:

1. Don't reel in the fish too aggressively, sometimes they fall off.
2. You'll never catch a fish without lure or bait in the water.
3. There are fishing seasons that are better than others.
4. Sometimes you must cut thru ice to catch fish.
5. Fishing is an investment of time and resources.

*If you think of other fishing applications send them my way.

Genesis 50:2, 26 “embalming” 2x. This is “inclusio” – an ancient writer’s technique for framing a literary unit – sort of like “book ends”. Everything that happens between the book ends is usually connected to the theme of the book ends. Inclusio is widely used in the bible – widely (for example John chapter two “third day/ in three days”).

Inclusio is sometimes an indicator that a “chiastic structure” or “mirror structure” is in place that points to the main verse or main idea of the literary unit. Chiastic structures look like this:

A-B-C-D-(E)-D1-C1-B1-A1. “E” being the main verse/idea.

For Example: The Inclusio is “embalming”

A – Embalming of Jacob (50:2-14)

- Jacob dies
- Egyptians mourn
- Journey to Canaan
- Burial in Machpelah
- Return to Egypt

B – Brothers fear judgment (50:15)

- “Now that our father is dead, Joseph will show his anger...”

C – Message of confession and plea for forgiveness (50:16-18)

- Brothers appeal to Jacob’s words
- They bow before Joseph

D – Joseph weeps (50:17b)

- Emotional turning point

E. CENTER – God’s providence over evil (50:19-20)

“Am I God?” “You intended evil against me, but God intended it for good...”

This is usually seen as the theological peak of the Joseph story – and arguably one of the key statements of all of Book of Genesis.

D’ – Joseph comforts and speaks kindly (50:21)

- Emotional reconciliation answers the earlier tears

C’ – Joseph promises provision for the brothers (50:21)

- Restoration replaces fear

B’ – Joseph’s approaching death (50:22-25)

- Another fear-of-the-future setting
- Joseph asks for faith concerning the Exodus

A’ – Death and embalming of Joseph (50:26)

- Joseph dies
- Embalmed in Egypt
- Awaiting future burial in Canaan
- Hope in “God will surely come to help you and lead you”

BONUS

CONTENT:

Genesis 50:3 Seventy days of mourning. Egyptian mourning period was 72 days. Hebrew mourning period was 70 days. The author by using 70 days is showing clearly that Jacob, although embalmed like Egyptian royalty, was truly a Hebrew of the covenant lineage.

Genesis 50:8 Back to Canaan? Do you think it was hard for the family to reenter the promise land - Canaan, and not stay, now that the famine was over?

Genesis 50:9 NASB "A very great company". In Hebrew similar language is used to describe when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon in **1 Kings 10:2**. The Hebrew word used is "kaved" - same as the word for "glory" describing God. It means "weighty, or of "significant substance". It is also associated with the word for armor.

Genesis 50:11 Another Abel? This Abel is not the same word as **Genesis 4**. Only in English are they translated the same. This Abel means "mourning".

Genesis 50:26 110 years. The ideal age to die in Egypt was 110 years. For Hebrews it was 120.

Genesis 50:26 "take my bones". Joseph uses the Hebrew language of having bones in a bone box (ossuary) after the body decayed, even though the text tells us he was embalmed.