

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

What god did Naaman the Syrian apologize to Elisha for worshipping?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jael - Judges 4:17-22

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The Faith Of Joseph

Chuck Durham

“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones” (Hebrews 11:22). Why pick his dying words as the supreme example of his faith? It seems anti-climatic contrasted with the faith Joseph showed in bravely dealing with Potiphar’s wife; enduring prison without bitterness or revenge; and forgiving his brothers.

I believe the writer chose these words because they are proof of how entirely Joseph believed God’s promise and longed for its fulfillment; and how little he felt at home in Egypt. He wore an Egyptian name, had an Egyptian wife, and was the highest ranking official of the Egyptian court, but he turned his thoughts always to the promised land. He could not bear to think of his bones residing in Egypt. He would share in the inheritance of his fathers, “Carry my bones up from hence!” What can we learn from Joseph’s faith?

The Principle of Faith Is The Same, Though Knowledge Varies. How much light could Joseph have

had compared with the fullness of revelation in Jesus? How dimly he must have understood the Abrahamic Covenant? The Christian's knowledge varies greatly from Joseph's. So what is common? Unyielding confidence in God. This unites us with Joseph. What makes Christians is not the theology in their heads, but the faith and love in their hearts. Doctrine matters, for without it there can be no faith. But it is not the doctrine that saves, but faith in the doctrine's reality. We are united to Christ by trusting His work, however feebly we understand the doctrines of atonement and justification. The new Christian with but minimal knowledge can eclipse the 40-year veteran who has no childlike love and happy confidence in his heart. What does belief in Jesus matter, if there is no filial devotion to Him? Forgiveness of sins—if we care not for our own? Life-everlasting—if all our hopes are here below? Are we Christians because of intellectual assent to the doctrines?

Faith Lives in the World to Come. Joseph was an Egyptian by all counts, but his dying words open a window to his soul. Dwelling amid the pyramids, sphinxes, and granite temples—the glory of Egypt—did not deter his vision by faith that here he had “no abiding city, but looked for the one to come” (13:14). He was always a “pilgrim and sojourner” in Egypt. Though he walked in Pharaoh's court, he dwelt in the heavenlies with the King of kings. How easy it is to avert our eyes to the cares below. On Sundays we profess to seek the city whose builder and maker is God, but what of Mondays-Saturdays? How are we in principle different from those who “have no hope”? If we are citizens above, we cannot help but be aliens below and “esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”

Faith Lives in the World Here and Now. God demands that we do our best in the here and now, “showing all good fidelity” (Titus 2:10). Joseph worked industriously for Potiphar, the jailer, Pharaoh, and Egypt. All below is apprenticeship and training. God produces His men and women in the here and now—at work, at play, at home, in government and society.

Faith Knows God Will Always Be There. Imagine the dread in his contemporaries' hearts at the death of their protector and prime minister of Egypt. But Joseph knew it was the One Who could not die that mattered for Israel. “I die, but God will surely visit you.” Though a thousand Josephs die, God's people will survive. Lean on the arms of Jesus and not upon any man.

Faith Knows That It Must Endure. Centuries would pass until God came and the ember of Israel's faith would be sorely tried. But the certainty in Joseph's mind was never questioned. God would come. Joseph had learned “to wait upon the LORD.” He had waited all his life—in a cistern, in slavery, in jail, in power and glory. For purposes that did not become clear to him until he saw his brothers again, God had caused Joseph to wait through all those acrid years filled drop by drop with pain and anguish. God had exalted him to save His people and the promised Seed. So Joseph's dying words were meant to steel Israel's faith. Whenever they saw his tomb they would never forget his bones were testimony to a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

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