

Speaker 1:

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Speaker 1:

If you live in or are visiting the Greater Phoenix Valley, please feel free to come and see Pastor Mark at The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona. Thank you for listening and being a part of Mark Driscoll Ministries. And remember it's all about Jesus.

Pastor Mark:

All right. If you've got a Bible, go to Genesis 49. We're nearing the end of the Joseph series. If you've not been with us, let me catch you up to speed. God is in the process through the course of Genesis of blessing his people, God blessed Adam and Eve. God then raises up Abraham, blesses him to be a blessing to the nations of the earth. His son Isaac is blessed to be a blessing.

Pastor Mark:

Jacob is blessed to be a blessing. And today we see Jacob as an elderly man on his deathbed, gathering around him, his sons, to give them their final blessing. And so he's going to conclude his life by putting a blessing on the next generation. And here's the big idea I have for you, I want you to be blessed. And I'm assuming if we took a vote, the majority of you would like to be blessed. Amen.

Pastor Mark:

We all want to be blessed. The opposite is cursing. And if we had to pick between the two, we want to be blessed. The question is, are there things that we can do, ways that we can live, places that we can dwell that encourages God to increase his blessing for us? Sometimes God just blesses for no apparent reason, just because he is good.

Pastor Mark:

But in addition to that, there are some people, and you'll see some of them today that receive a greater measure of God's blessing on their life because of their behavior. And when I'm speaking of blessing, I'm actually talking about three kinds of blessing. There is internal blessing, where you know that God loves you. God forgives you. God cares for you. You peace with God because God has peace with you.

Pastor Mark:

There's internal blessing about a clear conscience and a loved person. There's also external blessing. Somebody gives you a gift. They buy you a car. They pay off your mortgage. Somebody passes away, they leave their estate rather to you. Your boss gives you a big bonus. That's an external blessing. Then there's eternal blessing. Jesus says that we store up our treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy.

Pastor Mark:

Many, if not most of our blessings, are sent ahead and will be waiting for us when we enter into the kingdom of God. So blessings are internal, they're external, they're eternal. And there are two laws of

blessings that I want to set up for you before we jump into the story of Genesis, because sometimes we'll just read the story of blessing and not understand the laws that guide God's giving of that blessing.

Pastor Mark:

So it's the laws of loyalty and blessing, Psalm 133. "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." Some of your translations will say, "When brothers dwell together in unity." As we're looking at the story today, it's actually 12 brothers who previously to this point have not dwelt in unity. They've had a lot of division in fighting, corruption, back biting.

Pastor Mark:

It has been a brutal and really nefarious family system up until this point and changes are underway. What God is saying is that God likes to bless unity. He doesn't like to bless this unity. The story here continues, "It is like precious saw pour on the head, running down the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down the collar of his robe." You notice this down, down, down, where does blessing come from? It flows down. It flows down.

Pastor Mark:

He says the same thing here, "It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion." He's talking about here, the mountains, "For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." Here's the principle that'll guide all of our time together today. Loyalty is to go up and blessing is to go down. We are to be upwardly loyal. And those who are in authority are to bless those who are under them. This is the problem in America.

Pastor Mark:

This is probably the problem in your life. And if you're in your 20s, for sure, this is your problem. Okay? It's rebellion and dishonor, disregard, disrespect for authority. We are born innately rebels. Because of our sin nature, we do not want to live under any authority, including God's authority. And the essence in nature of sin is to live independent of authority as your own authority, that the entire problem, not the solution.

Pastor Mark:

And so what we see is that loyalty is to go up. This is the pattern of the Bible. So we'll just field test this, children are to obey and honor their? Mother and father. The wife is to respect her? Husband. And citizens, Romans 13, are to honor the governing authorities in their government. Those who are employees are to honor their employers. God, very clearly, very repeatedly, very emphatically talks about those who are under authority honoring and being loyal to those that are in authority.

Pastor Mark:

And then those in authority, God wants to bless so that the blessing flows down. So in my home, we want the children to honor me and mom. Want Grace to respect me. Want to honor the authorities, the pastors in our life. And also the governing authorities that are over my family and abide by the laws so that God's blessing would come down on me and to my wife and to our kids and Lord willing, if and when the day comes, our grandkids, and they're going to be cute.

Pastor Mark:

And I can't wait for that day. But that's what I'm hoping for that the blessing flows down. So loyalty is to be upward and blessing is to be downward, not loyalty that is sideways. When loyalty is sideways, what you get is a faction. This has been the problem in this family. They were a factious family. The brothers were loyal to each other, but they were not loyal to their father.

Pastor Mark:

They did things that their father did not want them to do. They married girls they weren't supposed to marry. They murdered people they weren't supposed to murder. This was a real problem family. The brothers actually betrayed one of their brothers and they lied to the father so that he would think that his beloved was dead. So they were loyal to each other, they were not loyal to their father.

Pastor Mark:

Their loyalty was sideways. It was not upward. Loyalty is also not downward. If you are one who is encouraging downward loyalty, you are a cool leader. You're a cool leader. What you're saying is there is leadership, but you be loyal to me and then we will overthrow them. We will overthrow them. This happens in work. This happens in family. All of a sudden, mom is loyal to the kids, but mom is not loyal to dad.

Pastor Mark:

And mom and the kids are not loyal to the Lord. And then all of a sudden there's an insurrection where there is a coup attempt with mom and the kids to overthrow God and dad in the family. This happens in business. If somebody comes into your office and you're in management and they say, "We have been talking and we have decided, and I am the representative." You officially have a problem. That's a coup attempt.

Pastor Mark:

It's saying we are trying to unseat you as the leader, and they have appointed me as the new leader. And I am loyal to them downward, not loyal to you upward. Americans don't even think this is a problem, I don't want to get too deep into our painful past, but we got here through rebellion.

Pastor Mark:

And we can argue whether or not that rebellion was godly, but ongoing continued rebellion against authority is not always godly. That we live in a day when parents do not have any loyalty governing authorities or God, when children do not have loyalty to their parents, when employees do not have loyalty to their employers. And ultimately, all of this just creates chaos and rebellion.

Pastor Mark:

And God is less likely to flow down blessing to those who are not loyal, those who are not honoring, those who are not, if I could use this controversial phrase, they're out of line, because the blessing flows ultimately through this family line. Now up until this point, Jacob the father has not been very loyal to God. He's not worshiped the Lord. He's not obeyed God. He's got four women.

Pastor Mark:

He's had 13 kids with, this is not God's ideal best. His sons are not loyal to him. And as a result, the whole family is in crisis and chaos. Jacob, the father also known as Israel, the nation of Israel is named

after him, he's had what we'll call repentance. He's acknowledged his sin and rebellion in his folly and that he has not been loyal to God. So he can't down to his sons and say be loyal to me, when he's not loyal to God.

Pastor Mark:

He can't say follow me, if he's not following God. He cannot say obey me, if he's not obeying God. So Jacob, the leader, has to get himself in line with God. And he then starts to demonstrate upward loyalty to God. And he calls his sons around his deathbed and he is inviting them to be loyal to him so that God's blessing can flow down on the father and then to the sons and then ultimately, God's blessing will flow to the grandsons.

Pastor Mark:

That is principally, you'll now see it practically starting in Genesis 49. And the first thing we realize is that leadership starts by dealing with reality. Joseph is a brother and these brothers have a variety of character. Some are godly, some are ungodly, some were ungodly and have become godly. And the father does not pull his sons together, say the same thing to every son, give the same blessing to every son because he has a biblical mentality, not an entitlement mentality.

Pastor Mark:

We live in a day when we think everybody should be treated equal and we overlook character and merit. When it comes to blessing and distribution of assets and resources and power and permanence and wealth, you give more to those who are godly than to those who are ungodly, you give more to those who will do good than those who will do harm. And so what this man needs to do on his deathbed with his dying breath and his final day is he needs to deal with reality.

Pastor Mark:

Figure out who his sons are, speak to them an appropriate blessing, and then give to them the respective resources. So here it goes, "Then Jacob called his sons and said, gather yourselves together that I may tell you what shall happen in your days to come. Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel, your father." Here's what he's saying, "I'm loyal to God. You need to be loyal to me. I know what God's got to say to you boys, and I need you to listen."

Pastor Mark:

Up until this point, he's not been very loyal to God and they have not been very loyal to him, but the family here is changing. As the father is loyal to God, the sons become loyal to the father. Now they're all in the line that God can potentially bless them downward as loyalty is upward. And again, he's not going to give every son an equal share of the inheritance.

Pastor Mark:

He's going to distribute the resources contingent upon their character. We don't treat everyone the same, we treat people according to their character. We can love everyone the same, but we cannot give resources, power, wealth to those who will use it for evil. And he's got some evil sons. He deals with reality, starts with Ruben. "Ruben, you were my first born." The first born in that culture was supposed to be the one who got the lions share of the inheritance.

Pastor Mark:

They were supposed to be the family leader. They were the one that was supposed to receive the baton from the father and carry it on in the next generation and be the leader of the family. But Ruben has a character problem. He's not been loyal to his father and he's not been loyal to his God. As a result of no upward loyalty, there will be a reduction of downward blessing.

Pastor Mark:

"You are my first born, my might, the first fruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. You're strong, you're capable, you're also naughty." He goes on to say, "Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence. The blessing will not be the same for you. Ruben, my son, you have been living under a sense of entitlement." You're 20 something American. You think that you just deserve things because you were born.

Pastor Mark:

You think that everyone owes you. You think just because you came out of mom first, that you just deserve everything that you feel that you should have. You have an entitlement mentality, son. You do not have an attitude of gratitude. You have not earned through your character what you could have had, had you demonstrated better integrity. This is a strong word. This is at his deathbed. This is awkward. Amen.

Pastor Mark:

Hey dad, says he wants to meet with us. Okay, dad. You're a naughty boy and I'm cutting you out of the inheritance. What? And this is their blessing. Let me say this, their dad's going to have some stern words. Two things, these are not little boys. These are grown men. Most of them are about my age, right? They've got gray beards, right? White beards. These are grown men. If you say this to a four year old, it's a bit much. Okay? There's still hope for them.

Pastor Mark:

But if you're a grown man and you're still not changing and not dealing with reality and you're character defects are continuing, it is very much a blessing for a loving leader, especially a parent, particularly a father to look in the eye and say, "This has been a problem. This is a problem. This needs to change so that this doesn't continue to be a problem." Sometimes a blessing is someone who brings you reality.

Pastor Mark:

Because many of us, we don't even visit reality, let alone live there. Right? We don't even pass through. How's it going? Great. No, it's not. How's your marriage? Awesome. She's crying and has an attorney. I don't think it's going as good as you think. Right? How's your finances? We'll be fine. No, you're not. No, you're not. You're not doing well. It's not working. You're not paying attention.

Pastor Mark:

You're not loyal to wise counsel. You're not loyal to leadership. You're not loyal to God's word. You're not loyal to God. You're not loyal upward, so there's not blessing downward. That's the story of Ruben. Some of you even ask, what did Ruben do? Well, he was a naughty boy. Because you went up to your father's bed, then you defiled it. Then you went up to my couch.

Pastor Mark:

How many of you shouldn't be in your dad's bed? Everyone raise your hand. Okay. This is not your place. You need to know your place. Your place is not in your dad's bed with your dad's wife. Amen. Yeah. Somebody threw up in your mouth. That's the appropriate response. He had two wives, two concubines, 13 kids, 12 boys, one girl with four different women.

Pastor Mark:

Now, part of the situation with dad though is, it's really hard for dad to hold the moral high ground when he is like, "Don't sleep with that woman." Why dad? You sleep with her. Well, she's my concubine. Why do you got a concubine? Stop asking questions. If you've got four women that you've had kids with and they're all living in the same house doing sister wives, it's really hard to look at the kids and say, "Now you boys, keep your pants on and be good boys."

Pastor Mark:

They'll look at dad and be like, "We all got different moms. And they're still here. And this is a very complicated family system." Sometimes parents saw off the limb that they're sitting on by their own character. That's why some of your parents said, "Do as I say, not as I do, which means I'm a hypocrite." Right? That's what that means. That's what that means.

Pastor Mark:

So Ruben though, what Ruben did, his dad's got two wives, two concubines. These are the four mothers of the 13 children. Ruben apparently seduces one of dad's wives and sleeps with her in dad's bed. Now, we know this is wrong, right? If this was on Jerry Springer, we'd still know it was wrong. Right? It's that episode. It's the bad reveal. You're like, "Oh."

Pastor Mark:

And what he's saying is this, "Ruben, you are a naughty, nasty, disloyal, dishonoring, disregarding son. You never apologized. You never repented. You never changed. Who you were is who you are. Therefore, I cannot let you be the leader of the next generation of the family, because I have not yet seen change in you. I've not seen change in you."

Pastor Mark:

He goes on to, "Simeon and Levi are brothers. They're like two barrels on a gun. These guys are a real problem. Weapons of violence are their swords. Let my soul come out into their counsel." What dad says is I don't even feel safe being alone with you two boys. You guys are not safe people, dangerous. "Oh my glory, be not joined to their company."

Pastor Mark:

What he's saying is I'm kind of grieved you've got my last name because what you guys do, it kind of really sheds a dark cloud over the family. "For in their anger they killed men." They murdered a whole town. These are blood thirsty men. "And in their willfulness they hamstringed oxen." You know what it is to hamstring an oxen? These are men who oversee livestock. That's their livelihood and family business.

Pastor Mark:

These two boys for fun and sport, they would come up, pull the buck knife off their belt and they would slit the tendon in the back of the ox. So then it's crippled and lame and bleeding and struggling until it

painfully slowly dies. That's what they do for free time, weekends, hobbies. They inflict pain and they watch suffering. That's evil.

Pastor Mark:

Counselors will tell you, if you start to see a child manifest destructive pain causing injury to an animal, without some serious professional help, what kind of adult is that child going to become? Yup, serial killer. Right. That's not good. Amen. It's bad. If you say, what does your kid do for fun? They torment animals. Call 911. Get some help. These are not little boys. These are grown men. Some of you parents, you think, "Oh, they'll outgrow it." Not necessarily.

Pastor Mark:

See, sometimes parents don't deal with reality. "Oh, they got a good heart." No, they don't. Ask the ox. They do not have a good heart. "Well, you don't understand them." No, I do understand them. One of the preeminent things that a parent needs to deal with is reality. And not just say, "Well, they're going to outgrow it. Or that's their personality. They're a JRK. They took the test. And that's just their personality. That's just how they are."

Pastor Mark:

He doesn't make excuses. He doesn't avoid or ignore reality. These are not little boys. These are grown adult men. And he tells them you're violent, dangerous, evil men. Should they get an equal part of the inheritance along with everyone else? Yes or no? No, because what will they do with it? Evil. It's like, "I got a kid who's a serial killer. I need to make sure that he gets a lot of the inheritance so that he can be very effective."

Pastor Mark:

This is where God doesn't believe in entitlement. God believes in blessing people and character counts. And he is being honest with them. And it is a blessing when someone is honest with you, if you have a serious character defect. He goes on with Simeon and Levi, "For in their anger they killed men. They hamstringed oxen. Cursed should be their anger, it is fierce. And their wrath, it is cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

Pastor Mark:

The blessing will not be the same for them. And look at the words, violence, anger, killed, anger, fierce, wrath, cruel. If that is on your LinkedIn page, you have a problem. Some people are like that. How many of you know somebody like that? You're like, "They are dangerous, violent. And I don't like being with them because they're not safe."

Pastor Mark:

He's being honest with his sons, in the presence of his other sons, knowing that he's about to die, hoping that the brothers will pick up where he left off and continue to deal with the character defects. Judah. Now Judah is the one who will become the leader.

Pastor Mark:

"Your brother shall praise you. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons shall bow down to you. Judah is a lion's cub from the prey. My son, you have gone up. He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, as a lioness, who dares rouse him?" Will pick up this verse at the end.

Pastor Mark:

"But the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, his teeth are whiter than milk."

Pastor Mark:

Let me give you the story of Judah. When he started was he a good guy or bad guy? Bad guy. Bad guy. He participated in the plot to sell Joseph into slavery, lie at the funeral and keep up the rules for a couple of decades to dishonor his father. He married an ungodly woman. He raised kids that are so ungodly that God killed them. He thought he was sleeping with a prostitute and then he found out it was his daughter-in-law. Right?

Pastor Mark:

They didn't put this on the flannel graph at the Baptist Church when you were growing up. Amen. You're like, "I didn't know all of that." Right. They didn't tell us that. Because the Bible is the most honest book that's ever been written. That's why it's the most helpful because it's the most truthful. Who he was, was a bad guy. At this point, he's changed.

Pastor Mark:

To use the language of the Bible, he's repented of his sin. He's acknowledged that he has not been loyal to his father. He'd actually been very disloyal. And he'd not been to his God. He'd been very unloyal, but he has had a change of heart. He's had a change of mind. He's had a change of life direction and character. He's changed. He's changed.

Pastor Mark:

And I want this to be an encouragement to all of you, any of us or all of us who come here like Judah, there is an opportunity to repent of our sin, to deal with reality, to be loyal to authority, to be loyal to God's authority. And then as our loyalty goes up, blessing comes down. Had this man not changed, he'd be in the same position as Ruben and Simeon and Levi. Three bad guys who were still bad.

Pastor Mark:

So the blessing is not the same for them. He was a bad guy who changed and by God's grace was a different and new man. We would use the language, today, that he was born again. And as a result, he is the one who will receive much blessing. That's where there is hope for us. And this is why we ultimately love the Lord Jesus, who's coming through this family line. He makes repentance of sin possible.

Pastor Mark:

He makes newness of life possible. He puts us in a place where God can bless us because we're in the line of his blessing. "Zebulun shall dwell, verse 13, at the shore of the sea. His shall become a Haven for

ships and his border shall be at Sidon." So he is apparently loyal upward to his dad and his God. And as a result, the blessing that flows down is that he'll be a mariner, he'll live by the sea.

Pastor Mark:

And he and his family and his legacy because all of these boys are going to become the 12 tribes of Israel and the nation of Israel today descends from them. And he will be blessed at the seashore. And what the father is doing here, he is helping set up his sons for their future. This is really important that one generation help the next generation determine their destiny.

Pastor Mark:

This is particularly true of parents. How many of you have got kids right now? They're teenagers or 20 somethings, and they're trying to figure out what do I pick as a career path? What do I choose as a major in college? What is my life course? This is where knowing your child, knowing your children, helps you to direct them. Amen.

Pastor Mark:

Otherwise, some people just wander through life thinking that their skilled at something that they're not skilled at, they're skilled at something else. He doesn't look at all of his sons and say, you all get the same blessing because we believe in entitlement and you're all going to do the same job because you're in the same family. He says, your character is like this. So here's your blessing. And your abilities are like this.

Pastor Mark:

So here's your career path and opportunity. And it's really, really helpful. And one of the foolish things that we do in our culture, and there's a whole list. But one of them is when someone turns 18, we say they're an adult now, they make all their own decisions. They don't know what they're doing. Have you seen an 18 year old? They're not fully baked, right? I mean, they still need time in the oven. Right?

Pastor Mark:

How many of you turned 18 and you woke up and you're like, "I'm as stupid as I was yesterday. That cake didn't fix anything." As parents and grandparents and leaders have experience, we can look and say, okay, you're like this. You're like that. Here's your character. Here's your character. Here's your abilities. Here's your capacities. This is what God could have for you.

Pastor Mark:

This is what God could have for you. These are the things that need to change, you need to repent of. These are the directions that you need to pursue. And dad is doing that on his deathbed. It goes on verse 14, "Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds. He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant at forced labor."

Pastor Mark:

Here's what he's saying, "Issachar, you're a big, strong, lazy guy." You ever met a guy like that? Or a guy like that and you're like, "They're big. They could probably carry something. They're really strong." No,

they're really good at napping, not working. Really good at napping, not working. There are some people who are lazy. The only thing that motivates them is pain.

Pastor Mark:

When it hurts so bad, then they go to work. And as soon as they get enough to go home, they go home and they lay down again until it hurts again. And he's saying, "This is your problem, son. You're lazy. You have skill. You have ability." Any of you play sports? And you meet the person, you're like, "They are a natural athlete, but they're undisciplined. They don't work out. They don't show up. They don't put in the effort. As a result, they have much unrealized potential."

Pastor Mark:

That's what he's saying about his son. You have much potential. You're physically strong. You're healthy. You have great tremendous capacity. There's a lot of blue sky and upside for you. But your work ethic is really your downfall. You're lazy. You got excuses. You blame people. It's never your fault. And you always take a nap and sleep in. And instead of making plans, you make excuses.

Pastor Mark:

And instead of getting up, you're sitting down. This starts when kids are young, this starts as we're raising them. And at this point he's a grown man who's got a family that's depending on him. And so it is now approaching the place of a crisis. Because a lazy man leading a family, is a real problem for that woman and for those children. This is dad here giving final directives. Again, this was probably an awkward conversation. Amen.

Pastor Mark:

But this is a helpful conversation because leaders have to deal with reality. And they need to get those that are under their authority to deal with reality. And up until this point, the boys are not dealing with reality. They're living in fantasy. And as a result of love for them, great love for them. I'm assuming with tears in his eyes and hope and his voice, he's trying to course correct them because he sees generations implicated by their decisions.

Pastor Mark:

"Dan," he says, verse 16, "Shall judges people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward. I wait for your salvation, O Lord. He says, "Dan, you're tough. And you're an honorable man of integrity. When there is injustice, oppression, evil falsehood, you insert yourself, you involve yourself. You defend the widow, the orphan, the poor, the marginalized, the outcast."

Pastor Mark:

Some of you are justice people. And when someone is being used and abused, when someone is being oppressed and distressed. It bothers you. And you want to insert yourself to bring mercy and healing and hope and help, so that that person has an advocate. That's why you love Jesus so much. That's what he did for you. And ultimately, he saying, "Son you're like that."

Pastor Mark:

"So go be a police officer, go be a soldier. Right? Go be a defense attorney who is saving those who cannot otherwise afford to defend themselves in the court of law. You go be that justice seeker. You be that justice bringer. That's who you are, Son." Speaking life into him. He goes on in verse 19, "Raiders shall raid Gad." He's listing all the 12 sons. "But he shall rate at their heels."

Pastor Mark:

Here's what he says, "Son, you're going to get attacked. People are going to oppose you. Your life is going to be hard. All right. It's going to be grinding forward one step at a time. But just know this son, God is with you. God is for you. He will never leave. Never forsake you. He will give you great victory if you remain in loyalty to him." This is to give him some indication of his future.

Pastor Mark:

And let me say this, sometimes God gives us prophetic words to speak over the life of someone else. Now we need to be careful that we don't pretend that it's equal to scripture, but God here has given to the father some words to speak regarding the future destiny of the sons. And as he is envisioning the future for this tribe, because from each of these sons is going to come a nation.

Pastor Mark:

At this point, it's a family of 70 people. By the time you flip over to the next book of the Bible, it has been more than 400 years, and they are a nation of a few million. So out of these sons will come tribes. They will return home to the promised land. They will become the nation of Israel. The whole point of which is through whom would come the Lord Jesus. So there's a lot writing on the character of these boys.

Pastor Mark:

You never, never know what God is doing in history with your destiny through your family. You never know. You never know who your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren might be. And the decisions you make today, they ring for generations. And so the father here is speaking blessing, direction, correction, instruction over the children for the sake of the children's children.

Pastor Mark:

He goes on to say in verse 20, "Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal delicacies." "Son, you're going to do farming. You're going to have a great plot of land. You're going to grow some great crops. You're going to feed your family. You're going to create a family business. And this is going to be a generational legacy in agriculture. That's your path, son." Do you notice how everyone's different?

Pastor Mark:

You guys are going to be fishing out at the sea. You guys are going to bring justice in the courts. You're going to be the one who's plowing the field. God has a destiny that's different for everybody. The key is just to know God's will for your life and then accept that and live within that. Verse 21, "Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns."

Pastor Mark:

Here's what he's saying, "You're a handsome guy. You got a cute wife. I prophesy adorable grand babies. That's what I prophecy." That's true. And there was a couple today, told me, "We're pregnant," and I

prophesy adorable grandkids. I could just see their kids are going to be adorable, their grandkids are going to be adorable.

Pastor Mark:

And grandpa here is saying, "I'm not going to meet your kids. I'll be dead before they come. But God is going to bless you with children, and I'll lot of them. And they're going to be chubby and cute." Because children are a blessing. This is all about blessing. This is all about blessing. Now, Joseph, Judah thus far got the majority of instruction and blessing. And now by sheer length, Joseph will get the majority of blessing.

Pastor Mark:

Why? Greater upward loyalty results in greater downward blessing. For those sons who were not loyal to God or their dad, there is still some blessing because God and their dad are gracious. But for those who like Judah, have had a change of heart and mind, they've repented, but they wasted so many years. There is still blessing for them. Joseph has practiced, here's my thesis, and I'll field test it on you.

Pastor Mark:

Joseph has practiced upward loyalty, as a result, there is greater downward blessing. So let's field test my concept. Was Joseph loyal to his father as a young man? Yes. And he was loyal to God. When he was sold into slavery and taken by Potiphar, for those of you who remember the story, was he upwardly loyal to Potiphar? Yes or no? Absolutely. To the degree that Potiphar's wife kept trying to seduce him. Right?

Pastor Mark:

So she's on Tinder. She's really active. She's got a lot of problems. She's a troubled woman. Okay. So she keeps pursuing Joseph and she's like, "He's gone. Nobody will know, let's let's do this." Joseph tells her, "I cannot be disloyal to my master, your husband, or to my God." That's exactly what he says. That's exactly what he says. She wanted him to practice literally sideways loyalty, literally sideways loyalty. Okay?

Pastor Mark:

"Let's lay down together." And he said, "No. My loyalty is not to you. It is to your husband and my God. And you should be loyal to your husband. And you should be loyal to my God." She falsely accused him of rape and had him thrown in prison. When he got the prison, was he loyal to the prison guard that oversaw the prison? Yes or no? Yes.

Pastor Mark:

He served so faithfully, he was so trustworthy, that they gave him keys to the prison. There's not a lot of inmates that get keys. Amen. You really have integrity if they give you a set of keys. He is running the whole prison. He is now working for the Pharaoh. Is he upwardly loyal to the Pharaoh? Yes or no? Yes. And ultimately to God.

Pastor Mark:

The course of Joseph's life, he has never been in the first chair. He's always in the second chair. He's loyal to his father and God. He's loyal to Potiphar and God. He's loyal to the prison guard and God. He's

loyal to the Pharaoh and God. As a result of a lifestyle of up awkward loyalty, there is eventually downward blessing. It doesn't happen quickly. And you and I tend to be very impatient.

Pastor Mark:

Or at least I tend to be very impatient. And if you're like me, you impatient. Right? That's why I love Arizona. The speed limit is a recommendation for the minimum speed at which you were supposed to travel. It is. If you don't believe me, I'll text it to you while I'm driving and you could just learn. So I'm not patient. I yell at the microwave. I am not patient.

Pastor Mark:

Joseph has continually practiced upward loyalty, and loyalty to God. And it takes a long time, but eventually the blessing comes. So we read of this blessing. Verse 22, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring. His branches run over the wall." So they're in a desert like this. I used to read this until I moved to the valley. I was like, "What does that mean?"

Pastor Mark:

You get here, if you can buy a house next to a river that runs all year and everything is green and you don't have to pay for the water. You're blessed. Amen. You're blessed. That's what he is saying your life is going to be like that. "The flow of God's grace is going to just continue to flow through your life like a river in a desert. And though it may be barren elsewhere, there'll be much life and provision, sustenance and joy because God's presence flows, God's grace flows, God's blessing flows through your life, son."

Pastor Mark:

He goes on to say, "The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him and harassed him severely, yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob. From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." He's referring to the coming of Jesus, our good shepherd. "By the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty." Now, listen to this.

Pastor Mark:

"Who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents." You see a theme? Loyalty up, blessing down. He just says it here. Bless, blessings, blessings, blessings, blessings, beyond the blessings. How many of you want to be blessed?

Pastor Mark:

How many of you want to be loyal? It's the same question. Everyone wants to be blessed. Very few want to be loyal. The key to blessing flowing down is loyalty going up. That's the character story of Joseph. How many of you are in business and the rebellious employee is not getting the promotion? How many of you are parents and the disobedient child is not getting rewarded? God is our father.

Pastor Mark:

He wants you to be loyal to him, so that he can bless you. He goes on to say, "May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers." He's set apart. What he's saying is this, "Joseph, two things are going to happen concurrently in your life. God's blessing and others opposition." Do you know that these go together?

Pastor Mark:

Sometimes the more that God blesses you, the more that others oppose you because they are jealous, because they have a sense of entitlement, because they believe that they should have what you have. Some of you are going to have great money. Some of you are going to have great power. Some of you are going to have great influence. And some of you, it will come from God and he will give it to you as a blessing so that you can bless others.

Pastor Mark:

You can be generous and seek justice and do good to bring the kingdom of God here among the cultures of the earth. And there will be those who see that, they will have bitter envy. They'll have jealousy. They'll have a sense of entitlement. They will want to have what you have, but they will not want to have the character that you have. As a result, they will seek to take. And that is the opposite of blessing because blessing is about God giving. It's not about us taking.

Pastor Mark:

Jonathan Edwards is perhaps the greatest theologian in the history of our nation and he would talk about idol and demonize. That those that we idolize, we eventually demonize. That in our culture, we put people up so that we could tear people down. We cheer people to succeed. And then as they succeed, we get jealous and envious. And then we seek to destroy an attack and take from them.

Pastor Mark:

And what he is saying here is this, "Joseph, as God has blessed you, others will oppose you. As God lifts you up, others will seek to take you down. You need to understand Joseph, that God is with you. That God is for you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He will preserve you, just remain loyal to him. Be more worried about keeping your eyes on God than having your eyes focused on your enemies.

Pastor Mark:

Sometimes the hardest thing is to be successful, because others covet your success. Some of you are in business, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Nobody harassed you until it started to go good. Next thing you know, it's a real war. Some of you, your relationships were fine until things went well in your life. And now other people are very angry or upset or jealous. And they have a sense of entitlement instead of an attitude of gratitude.

Pastor Mark:

They can't rejoice with you. They have to take from you. That's the flip side of leadership. That's the flip side of success. And oftentimes in Christianity, we only appeal to those who have failed. But sometimes the hardest test is the success test. Will you still be humble? Will you still be joyful? Will you still be loyal to God or where you allow fear of others to drive your decision making?

Pastor Mark:

And so he is giving a prophetic word to his son, that God is going to bless you, but it's going to be hard for you. And then the last word is to Benjamin. "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil." He's a tough guy. He's a man's man. So there's two kinds of guys. There's guys who go to the grocery store to get their dinner.

Pastor Mark:

"I'll see you at the grocery store." And then there's guys that go into the woods to get their dinner. The two kind of guys, right? The guy who goes into the woods, he's like, "I'm hungry. What are you going to do? I'm going to go kill something. I'm going to skin it, grill it, eat it, praise God. I'm going to go get my own sustenance." Benjamin is the baby in the family.

Pastor Mark:

Just always goes to show, you can't just put people in stereotypes. "Oh, you're the baby." No, he's actually big, strong, tough. Right? He's got a beard. He drives a truck. He's got a bow. He's a dude's dude. He is. And what he's saying is this, "Son, God made you tough. God made you strong. God made you competent and capable. That's who you are. And I affirm that. And I blessed that."

Pastor Mark:

Couple of things. One on parenting, one for children. Number one, kids are different. Amen. Any of you have more than one kid? They're different. You notice that? Am I making this up? Kids are different. How many of you, you raised one kid and then you got the next kid and you did the same thing and you got totally different result? You're like, "Come on. Come on. Why can't you be like your," we figured it out.

Pastor Mark:

Kids are different. These kids are different. They're different. They have different personalities. They have different destinies. They have different careers. Kids are different, so we need to parent them relationally, not according to a formula. That's why I get frustrated with Christian parenting books.

Pastor Mark:

Oftentimes, it reads more like a paint by numbers kid or an IKEA, How to Put it Together sort of instruction manual. Step one. Step two. You're like, "Well, it worked with the first kid. It didn't work with the second kid. And the third kid burned the paper. So I don't know. I can't even find it." Some of you got that kid, right? You need a relationship with the kid.

Pastor Mark:

The dad doesn't just look and say, "Okay, kids. Here's my three points for a final sermon before I go see Jesus and tell him hi." Nope. "Here's God's word for you. Here's God's word for you. You're all different. You'll need different instruction and correction." That's God's word for the parents. For those of us who are children and we're all children of someone, you ready?

Pastor Mark:

You can't blame your family for your character. Did they all have the same dad? Yup. Did they all grow up in the same home? Yup. Were they all raised in the same religion? Yup. Did they all have the same character? No. If there was one child among this family that could have had the blank check for rebellion, who would've it been? Joseph.

Pastor Mark:

I mean, he could have pulled it out, "My brothers betrayed me. They sold me into slavery. I was falsely accused as a rapist. I spent time in prison and I've not seen my dad in two decades. That's why I drink a

lot. Listen to country, Western music and download naughty videos. That's why I do all of that because I've had a rough life and I have a messed up family. And I'm a victim. My name is Joseph. And I'm a victim."

Pastor Mark:

Is he a victim? Well, bad stuff has happened to him. Let's give him that. It's not what happens to you. It's what you decide you do with it determines your character and your destiny. That's why two people can go through the exact same experience and one goes left and one goes right. There are two ways to learn, positive and negative examples. Some of you had a great family and a positive example.

Pastor Mark:

Some of you have had a bad family and a negative example. Either way, class was in session, there were lessons to be learned. If you had positive examples, you can say, "I want to do it like that." If you had negative examples, you could say, "I do not want to do it like that." Either way you can learn from your family. Your family doesn't determine your destiny, your decisions determine your destiny.

Pastor Mark:

So what we see in this family, same father, same religion, same household, same circumstances. There are some guys who start bad and still are bad as grown men. They start the list, right? We read it. Ruby, Ruben, rather, Simeon and Levi. They start bad, they are bad. Judah starts bad, ends good. Joseph starts good, ends good. Different character, same family.

Pastor Mark:

They could have blamed it on the fact that I had four mothers, my dad played favorites. You don't need an excuse, you need a plan. You don't need an excuse, you need a plan. Joseph could have had a life of excuses, instead he spent his life working his plan. To be loyal to God and to wait for God to bless him. My fear, I love you. Your pastor, want good for you. Want God's blessing on you and your family and your future.

Pastor Mark:

But my fear is sometimes when we dig into stories like this, you say, "Yup, their family was messed up. My family's messed up. We're all victims. We're all broken. We're all wounded. We all have an excuse. We don't need to repent. We don't need to take responsibility. We don't need to change because bad things happened in the past and bad things will happen in the future. Therefore, it will be no different for my children's children than it was for me. There is no hope."

Pastor Mark:

Don't think that way. God is not done with Ruben, Simeon, Levi. There's a rebuke from their father, and an opportunity to repent and change. God has already done a great thing in the life of Judah and his father Jacob. They went from bad guys to worshipers. And we see with Joseph, that he is loyal to God and as a result God's blessing flows down on his life. Number two, your last day is your most important day.

Pastor Mark:

Oftentimes the day of your birth is a big day. That's awesome. First day of school, great day. Wedding day, great day. The most important day is the last day. It's the finish line. We now see Jacob, Israel, grandpa, dad on his deathbed. Verse 29 or 28 rather, verse 49. "All these are the 12 tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them blessing each with a blessing suitable."

Pastor Mark:

Sometimes a rebuke is a blessing. Sometimes a correction is a blessing. Sometimes a, you need to lead your family, take responsibility. Get a job. You need to get up. You need to stop doing that. You need to pull it together. You know what's right. It's time to be loyal to God. Listen to me. Sometimes a rebuke is a blessing. Sometimes instruction is a blessing. Sometimes correction is a blessing.

Pastor Mark:

Some of you, you think that all you need is soft words. Sometimes soft words produce hard people. Sometimes hard words produce soft people. For some of his sons, he's got soft words because they're soft people. For his more hardened sons, he has hard words so that they would become soft people. All of this is a blessing.

Pastor Mark:

Then he commanded them, he wants them to be loyal to him. I'm telling you what to do. These are my instructions. And these boys have rebelled. They've not always obeyed their dad. Said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people. I'm going to die. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." What he's saying is, "I'm going to be loyal to my dad or my grandpa. I'm going to be buried with them so that the resurrection of the dead, the family is reunited."

Pastor Mark:

He goes on, "In the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought, that was his grandpa, bought with field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah," that's his grandpa and grandma. "There they buried Isaac and Rebecca's wife," that's his mom and dad. "And there I buried Leah," that's one of his wives. He really loved Rachel, but Leah is buried there.

Pastor Mark:

He's not going to be buried with his wife. I wonder if that's because he's more loyal to God. And the destiny out has for their family. Even though he loves his wife, he's not going to be buried with his beloved wife. "The field in the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites. When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people."

Pastor Mark:

He died. This is grandpa's last sermon. Your last day is your most important day. And here's what I want you to know, it's never too late to repent of sin, to give your life to God and to make a turnaround. He was a late bloomer. He was well over 100 before he really started walking with God. Some of you, you almost feel like gravity is taken over and it's too late for you.

Pastor Mark:

Our marriage can't be fixed. Our kids can't be pursued. Our life can't be put together. Or you know what, it's just a dumpster fire and it's over for us. It's not. This isn't a promise, but it's a hope. And the hope is that it's never too late to repent, to turn to God, to be forgiven. This is why Jesus came.

Pastor Mark:

To become a person who begins to be loyal to God and then in loving relationship, encouraging others, starting with your family, to be loyal to you as you are loyal to God and leading them back into God's purposes. It's never too late. One of the great lies that people hear from their enemy is that it's too late. Just keep going in the wrong direction.

Pastor Mark:

You've already got too much momentum. This family's gone from the promised land to Egypt. They have undergone massive transition, both externally and internally and ultimately eternally. It's never too late. And then they have the funeral for grandpa. And the point here is that good endings help new beginnings. The family is going to have a new beginning, but first they need to have a good ending.

Pastor Mark:

They need to properly bury dad and grandpa. I told you last week, it's like a race around a track where one generation takes the baton and hands it off to the next generation. And then they run their race. And then hands it off to the next generation. That's where Proverb says that a wise man leaves an inheritance for his children's children. Fools think of a good time, wise people think of a good legacy.

Pastor Mark:

Foolish people think in terms of days. And wise people think in terms of generations. And Jacob here is going to hand the baton to his sons so that their race can continue and then hand it to the grandsons, trying to extend the worship of God and the resources of the family as far into the future as they possibly can. "Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him." His he emotional? Yeah.

Pastor Mark:

A lot of men struggle emotionally connecting with their dad. Joseph doesn't, he's healthy. His dad dies, he's going to grieve. "And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. 40 days were required for it, that is how many are required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for 70 days." Flags at half mast, national mourn. Joseph honors his father.

Pastor Mark:

Everyone honors his father because Joseph honors his father. And ultimately at the end, his father was honoring God. So this is evangelistic. Ultimately, people are learning to honor the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. "And when the 40 days of weeping for him were passed, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, if I found favor in your eyes." I'm asking for a grace.

Pastor Mark:

What Joseph is saying is, "I don't ask for my self, but my father asked me to pledge to him to be loyal and to make sure that he was buried with his father and his grandfather. And I am asking you to help me

fulfill my loyalty to my father." "Please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, my father made me swear saying I'm about to die in my tomb that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan."

Pastor Mark:

This guy dug his own grave. He's got a plan. "There you shall bury me. Now therefore, let me please go up and bury my father. Then I will return." Joseph's so loyal that the Pharaoh can send him back to the promise land with his whole family and a massive entourage of servants and a ton of financial wealth, knowing that he will come back and serve the Pharaoh as a slave. That's loyalty. That's loyalty.

Pastor Mark:

Pharaoh answer, go up, bury your father, as he made you swear. So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, his father's household. Only their children, the little kids, their flocks and their herds were left in Goshen. And they went up with him and chariots and horseman. This was a very great company."

Pastor Mark:

I mean, this was televised, flags at half mast, kids out of school. This is national event. "When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan they, note that word friend, lamented there with a very great and grievous lamentation." There it is again. "And he made a mourning, same thing, for his father for seven days."

Pastor Mark:

"When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning there it is again on the threshing floor of Atad. They said, this is a grievous mourning by the Egyptians. Therefore, the place was named Abel-mizraim, it is beyond the Jordan. Thus his sons did for him as he commanded them." Are they loyal to him? Yes. Previous, they did not obey their dad. Here, they are obeying their dad.

Pastor Mark:

For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, buried him in the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre, which Abraham with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place." It kind of bogs down here and we get a little bored, but you know what? If this was our family, our dad, our grandpa, our brothers, our sisters, this would be our family history. By faith, this is our family history.

Pastor Mark:

"After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father." What does he do here? He laments. Lamenting is a great theme of the Bible. The book of Psalms is the worship and prayer book of The Old Testament, the largest category of Psalms are Psalms of lament. It's mourn, grieving, processing. There's a book of the Bible called Lamentations.

Pastor Mark:

There are whole sections of the prophetic writings that are laments. Here's what lament is, you feel so that you can heal. Some of you have not grieved your past, which is why you're broken in the present and fearful of your future. It's by grieving, mourning, processing, feeling the past that you become healthy. One of the worst things we tell people is that time heals all?

Pastor Mark:

Some of you have lived a long time and you know that's not true. Just like a physical injury that is untreated, time actually makes it worse. So it is in the soul, as it is in the body. It's not time. It's time with God that heals wounds. It's time with God that heals wounds. And it's lamenting. Lamenting is grieving, mourning, processing, unburdening, coming to resolution with God over the pain of your past.

Pastor Mark:

Men in particular, do not do this. We tend to celebrate our wins publicly, grieve our losses privately. We tend to nurse our hurts without speaking to anyone. And some of you, because you have pain in your past, you've decided, I don't want to feel that pain, so I choose not to feel anything. The problem is when you don't feel anything, you're now non-emotional, you're non-relational.

Pastor Mark:

Unless, of course, you get hurt and then you start leaking and venting. Or you get angry, and it comes out at the worst way in the worst time. You've ever done that? So then some of you withdraw, you don't have relationships because you're not a healthy person. And that hurt comes out in the worst way at the worst time. So you're trying not to feel, you're trying to be non-emotional and no-relational.

Pastor Mark:

Why do I tell you this? Because this sets us up for next week. The brothers have not healed from the pain of their past and as a result, the final scene between Joseph and his brothers is between people that have lamented. Rather, Joseph who has lamented and is healthy. And the brothers who have not and are unhealthy. And they're not yet healed. You can be forgiven of your sin, but not healed from your hurts.

Pastor Mark:

Joseph here is healing from his hurts. There are some things to mourn, his dad died. He lost his 20s and 30s with his dad. Those are years he can never get back. His sons don't meet their grandpa until their teenagers, and grandpa missed out on those years. There are things that he is grieving and mourning and lamenting. Lamenting is where you feel so you can heal. I'm out of time.

Pastor Mark:

I'm always out of time, but let me share. And I don't mean, and in conclusion, because that's not true and I don't want to lie. But let me share with you one thing this week, I was studying the emotional life of Jesus and the providence of God. Looking at the perfect life, emotionally, of the Lord Jesus, there's 60 occasions in the gospels that it speaks of his emotions. His number one emotion is compassion.

Pastor Mark:

He rejoices, he grieves. Question, does Jesus lament? He does. His friend Lazarus dies, and the shortest verse in the whole Bible is that Jesus wept. Jesus looks over the city of Jerusalem and sees that they're not loyal to God and he weeps. He laments. He mourns the rebellion of God's people. Some of you need to get some time with the Lord. You can't fix it. You can't change it.

Pastor Mark:

Those you years can't be returned, but they can be healed so that you can heal from the pain of your past and move forward with what God has for you and your family in the future. Joseph is lamenting and mourning and grieving and processing in the presence of God and others. And as a result, he's a very emotionally healthy person who is ready for a healthy emotional future.

Pastor Mark:

And what I love about the Bible is God is always doing so much. He's working on the lives of all of these people and their kids and their grandkids. He's working to reveal himself to the nation of Egypt. He is feeding those who are hungry. He is healing those who are broken and destitute. He is forgiving those who are repentant. And over and through it all, he is preparing to bring forth Jesus Christ.

Pastor Mark:

And let me conclude with this big idea. The whole point of this family, ultimately, is to get Jesus on the earth. Because if this is the solution, we have a big problem. Amen. If you look at this story and you say, "Yeah, our hope is in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Then there is no hope. The hope is not in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The hope is in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Pastor Mark:

That the whole point of this family is that through this family would become Jesus Christ. Another king would come greater than Pharaoh bringing another kingdom that is greater than Egypt. And so I'm going to ask him to throw it up and I'll move quick, but here it is. I don't know if you caught it into Genesis 49:10, the promise was made to Judah.

Pastor Mark:

The scepter, what's that? That's a king. That's a king who brings a kingdom in rules with all authority and dominion. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah." Jesus is coming through the family line of Judah, "Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience, the upward loyalty, of the people." The point is, Judah through you is coming Jesus who will be the King of Kings.

Pastor Mark:

He brings a kingdom of blessing, you need to be loyal to him. This is what I want you to know today. Jesus is our king. We must, we should, we get to be, we don't have to be, we get to be loyal to him. And then when he comes, he brings blessing for us. The story continues, 400 years later they go from a family of 70, to a nation of millions in the book of Exodus. And they make the return back to the promised land, the nation of Israel.

Pastor Mark:

And the people are wondering, where's our king? Where's his kingdom? Moses rises up and he says in Numbers 24:17, "I see him. I see him way down the corridor of history, but not now. I behold him, but not near. He's coming, but it's going to be a long time. A star shall come out of Jacob." An scepter shall arise out of Israel. He's coming, he's coming, but not soon. The story continues, and this is a theme and threat in the Bible.

Pastor Mark:

2 Samuel 7:12, "Up rises King David with a kingdom. And the promise is made that through him would come a greater king with an eternal kingdom. I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body. And I will establish his kingdom, the throne of his kingdom forever." Through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ultimately comes David. He is a king. He establishes a kingdom and the people are wondering, is he the one of the promise? Is he the son of God?

Pastor Mark:

Is he the anointed one? Is he the Messiah? And God says, "No, but through his line will come a king, who is the King of Kings. He'll be the greater David and he'll rule over for a greater kingdom." All the way to The New Testament, Matthew is writing primarily to Jewish people. And their question is, "Is Jesus the one that we were waiting for? Is Jesus the one that we were longing for? Has our king come? Is our kingdom here?"

Pastor Mark:

And so right up front at the very beginning, to assure the Jewish people who had been waiting for the coming of this king since the days of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Joseph, this is the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the chosen one, the anointed one, the son of David, the son of Abraham, Abraham, the father of Isaac, Isaac, the father of Jacob, Jacob, the father of Judah and his brothers. And it goes on to talk about Judah.

Pastor Mark:

What he's saying is he's here, he's come. The king has arrived. The one you've been waiting for, the one you've been longing for, the one you've been hoping for, the one who is greater than Joseph, the one who is greater than Judah, the one who is greater than David is here with a greater kingdom. Jesus lives without sin. Jesus dies on the cross in your place for your sins. There is no blessing apart from Jesus.

Pastor Mark:

There is no reconciliation of relationship with God, apart from Jesus. There is no hope for your family or your future apart from Jesus. Jesus lives the life you could not live. He died death you should have died. And he rose to announce and inaugurate a kingdom that will never end. And you too will rise from death to rule and reign and be blessed by him forever. Jesus then returns to heaven.

Pastor Mark:

And the people are wondering, where did our king go? And where is his kingdom? The kingdom is with the king, and we're now awaiting the coming of the king and the eternal unveiling of the kingdom. So the author of Hebrew says, "With the son, he says, your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom." Jesus is ruling and reigning in heaven right now. And one day he will be returning to earth.

Pastor Mark:

And the author of Hebrews promises, "When he comes, he will bring his scepter. He will plant it on the earth. He will pronounce all of creation is now officially his kingdom." We go from Genesis, the first book of the Bible to Revelation the last book of the Bible. And they're waiting and longing as we are. Jesus, where is your coming? Where is the coming of your kingdom? Weep no more.

Pastor Mark:

Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered. The promise is that the king is coming and his kingdom is coming. I'll close with this, Revelation 19. We're going to go from Genesis to Revelation because all of the Bible, it's about Jesus. All of history, it's about Jesus. And ultimately, everything thing makes sense when you understand who Jesus is and you have upward loyalty to him and then blessing flows down to you.

Pastor Mark:

Revelation 19, "Then I saw heaven open." Here's the unveiling. They were awaiting the first coming of Jesus. We're awaiting the second coming of Jesus. They were trusting that he was coming. We are trusting that he is coming again. In time, it says that, "I saw heaven open, and behold, a white horse." You old guys who watch Westerns growing up, who rides the white horse? The good guy. The good guy always rides the white horse.

Pastor Mark:

Here's Jesus, cowboy, Cave Creek, carefree riding in Jesus. Amen. If this doesn't fire you up, your wood's wet. I got nothing for you. All right. "The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True and in righteousness he judges and makes war." He will put down Kings and kingdoms. He'll put down criminals and thugs and bullies and liars and he will lift up those who have been downtrodden. With this king comes a kingdom. And with that kingdom comes his justice.

Pastor Mark:

Goes on to say, "His eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems," that's crowns. You know you're somebody when you're crowns crown and has a crown. Amen. You got a backup crown to your backup crown. That's how kingly you are. "He has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood. And his name by which he is called is the word of God."

Pastor Mark:

The word of God, what we see here is Jesus on a horse with a sword that is the word of God, coming forth to make war, to establish a kingdom and to take his church as his beloved princess to live with him forever. All you 20 year old guys playing video games, put down the joystick, pick up the Bible. That's all, just a rip off of our story. Your sword, nothing compared to his sword.

Pastor Mark:

The fake kingdom you were fighting for is nothing compared to the kingdom that he brings. And the princess you're trying to rescue is not nearly as lovely as his beloved church. This is why when I was a father of young sons, I let them play with swords. Not real swords, because I was a pretty good father, but fake swords. And I noticed with my sons, they want plastic swords and they would want to fight.

Pastor Mark:

And I thought, "Oh, that's because they're worshipers of Jesus. That's because Jesus is coming back on a horse. He is faithful and true. He will bring out his sword. And he will bring justice to the nations. So boys, play with your plastic swords until Jesus gets back." He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood. He goes on, "The armies of heaven, the saints, the angels, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses."

Pastor Mark:

You know a guy is confident going to war wearing white linen. Let me just point this out. White linen is what you wear at your wedding, at Catalina Island, while you are sitting outside sipping something with an umbrella in it, anticipating a sunset with your feet up. That's when you wear white linen.

Pastor Mark:

Any guy who shows up to a cage fight wearing white linen, any guy who shows up to a street fight wearing white linen, any guy who shows up to the front line of a war wearing white linen is A, very confident that he's going to win. And B, very confident it's not going to take much effort and it'll be over very quickly. He won't even get dirty. Doesn't even need to clean this outfit, it's going to go so fast.

Pastor Mark:

Jesus knows exactly what he's doing. Jesus knows exactly when he's coming. And Jesus will bring a victory, I assure you of that. "From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike the nations and he'll rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. And on his robe and on his thigh, here comes the Jesus. He has a name written, maybe a tattoo, says King of King's, Lord of Lords." Ultimately, that Jesus is coming.

Pastor Mark:

He is greater than Pharaoh. His kingdom is greater than Egypt. His first coming was assured and came to pass. His second coming is assured and will come to pass. They were awaiting the coming of Jesus. We are waiting the second coming of Jesus. In the meantime, you and I, we are invited to be loyal to him so that his blessing can flow down on us.

Pastor Mark:

And I love you and I want good for you and I want good for your children and I want good for your children's children's children, but there is no blessing apart from loyalty. We're going to now invite you to be loyal to Jesus, to repent of your sin, to trust in him, to partake of Communion, to sing and to celebrate our king and his kingdom.

Pastor Mark:

Let me pray for you, father God, thank you so much for your word. Lord God, I'm so excited about this book that you have written. It tells us who you are. It tells us who we are. It tells us what the purpose of history is. It tells us where our hope comes from it. It tells us where our eternal residents will be. It tells us what our problem is, sin.

Pastor Mark:

It tells us who our savior is, Jesus. Jesus, as we think of Joseph, if he could serve Pharaoh, we can serve you. If he can be loyal to a man who thinks he's God, we can be loyal to a man who is God. Lord God, if Joseph could serve the kingdom of Egypt, we surely can serve your kingdom. If Joseph could endure all that he endured, surely we can endure whatever you have appointed for us to endure.

Pastor Mark:

Lord God, if Joseph could bless those who cursed him, certainly we could bless those who have cursed us. God, I asked for faithfulness, loyalty, honor, fidelity among your people. And that Lord God, your

blessing would flow down as our loyalty flows up. So God, as we come to partake of Communion, we think of Egyptians who needed bread to survive. But Lord Jesus, you are the bread of life.

Pastor Mark:

Apart from you, we spiritually die and we need you. Lord God, as we partake of drink, we remember the shed blood of Jesus. That truly blessing flowed out of your side Lord God, Jesus as you died on the cross, in our place, for our sins, your blood flowed so that a blessing would float us. Holy Spirit, I invite you to be present in our midst as you were in the life of Joseph.

Pastor Mark:

That these people would experience freedom, that they would experience hope, that they would experience joy, that they would heal from the pain of their past, that they would look forward to hope in their future. And that Lord Jesus, we now pronounce this to be a kingdom place. We pronounce this to be sacred ground designated to our king and whose name we now sing and pray. The strong name of, Jesus.