

Genesis - From Creation to New Creation

[Genesis 23:1-20](#)

“Hope Beyond the Grave” – March 26, 2023



Introduction

Would you rather attend a birthday party or a funeral? Would you rather stand at the graveside of a loved one or go to the hospital to see a newborn baby? The preacher in Ecclesiastes says a funeral is better than a party because a funeral is a better teacher. ([Ecc 7:2](#)) Death is a great perspective giver. The day before your funeral, all the things that you care about, the grudges that you've held, the bank account that you worry about, the recognition you crave will not matter. What will matter is a good name. We want to be remembered as someone who lived their life for the glory of God. What will matter most is what God says about us.

The problem is that we know that we can have the pleasure, the comforts, the security, and the applause that the world offers us right now. The world tells us that we don't have to wait. Believing God's promise and living by faith means waiting. How can we be confident that there is a heavenly home for us? If there is no resurrection, we have no hope. ([1 Corinthians 15:12-19](#)) We KNOW there is a land somewhere - a city not made by hands, but by God. How do we know? How can we be sure that living by faith will not be wrong? Sometimes we feel like we are on the losing team. Can we be sure that God is preparing a place for us?

Sermon Outline

1. Accept a sojourner's grief. Vs. 1 - 4
2. Rejoice in a sojourner's hope. Vs. 5-20

Read & Discuss

1. Read vs. 1-4

Sarah had spent 62 years waiting. She had the son of promise, but still no land. The land of Canaan was still the land **of** Canaan. Abraham was living as an exile in this land. God promised it to him, but it wasn't his yet. Sarah died **in** the land of promise, but she never saw God's promise fulfilled. We have to wrestle with the question, “Is God faithful?” Can God be trusted to do what He says? Abraham recognized that he was a sojourner. He didn't own any land, but Abraham also knew that he was not home yet.

Over the years, both Abraham and Sarah learned that nothing is too hard for God. Not even death is an obstacle to God fulfilling his promise. There are some who teach that if we have enough faith, we can have it all now. That is not true.

Abraham was in grief. He was weeping. He was heartbroken. His wife was dead. Grieving is not a sign that you lack faith. It is God's gift to help us heal a broken heart. Like Abraham and Sarah, we are sojourners. We are not home yet. ([Phil. 3:20](#)) In our walk of faith, we will experience grief, but we have an anchor of hope. ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#))

Abraham could have given up and gone back to Ur, but he didn't. Death was heartbreaking, but it was his teacher. It reminded him of what was important. God promised him the land, and God is faithful. What has ever made you consider giving up? What kept you from doing it?

In vs. 4, Abraham asked to purchase "property." It is the same Hebrew word for “everlasting possession.” ([Genesis 17:8](#)) Abraham was asking to own land for keeps. However, Abraham is a foreigner and not eligible to own land. So when Abraham asks to buy land, it sets up the tension in the next verses.

2. Read vs. 17-26

Why would Moses include all the negotiation for the land? The focus of this chapter is on the land. The Hittites are referred to as the people of “the land” - the promised land - Canaan. Moses wants the people of Israel to remember that God promised them the land.

In verses 10, 13, 16, 18 we see that there were witnesses to this transaction. It was legitimate. There would be no question that this piece of land belonged to Abraham and his descendants. It seemed generous that the cave would be offered for free, but if there was no purchase than Ephron was only loaning the land. He could take it back. God promised Abraham that he would own the land.

Ephron passively mentions a price. Abraham doesn't flinch because the money wasn't important to him. What was important was that he got the land. The land was "made over" to Abraham as a possession - just as God had promised. Abraham had waited 62 years for this. Do you like waiting? Remember, we are here for a funeral. The land he got was a grave. If we base our contentment on the things of this world, we will be let down. True contentment comes when God is all we want. ([Psalm 73:25-26](#)) Can your heart say that? Contentment takes a lifetime to learn, but we can learn it.

As Christians, we are sojourners. This world is not our home. When we face grief, disappointment, and sorrow and when walking by faith involves waiting, we will be tempted to ditch our sojourner status and go back to the world we left. We will be tempted to take the sinful shortcut. We can accept a sojourner's grief because we have a sojourner's hope. ([1 Peter 1:3-6](#)) This side of heaven, we will have trials and grief, but we can rejoice. We have an unshakable, living hope. God has promised us the new heaven and the new earth. It is sure. It is kept, guarded and secure. It is rooted in the resurrection.

What does it look like to live as sojourners in this world? (Four Applications)

1. Strive for holiness - refuse to settle for the empty cisterns of the world. ([1 Peter 2:11](#))
2. Pursue the approval of God then man. ([Matthew 6:1-18](#))
3. Give generously to Gospel initiatives. ([Matthew 6:19-20](#))
4. Seek first the kingdom of God. ([Matthew 6:33](#))

This is hard as well as contrary to how the world thinks we should live. Is it worth it? Can we know that we are not wasting of our life? God is faithful, and not even death could keep God from keeping His word. Abraham and Sarah knew this. ([Hebrews 11:8-16](#)) It wasn't wishful thinking for them, and it isn't for us either. Abraham bought the grave in faith. It would be where Abraham and his descendants would be buried. They lived by faith and not by sight. This tomb will be a physical monument of that faith.

Can you imagine Joshua leading the people into the land? He could remind a fearful army that the land was already theirs. God promised them not just the tomb but all of the land.

Is this world and all it offers what you are living for? Are you living for what you can see? One day you will die. Death comes to all of us. ([Romans 6:23](#)) The good news is that Jesus came and lived a perfect life, offering us hope beyond the grave. He died the death we deserved, in our place, as our substitute. Jesus was buried but on the third day He rose from the grave - death could not hold Him. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He promised a place. ([John 14:1-3](#)) The empty tomb guarantees us a future home. Do you have this hope?

Death will not have the final say. We have a hope. The resurrected Jesus was the first fruits. He had victory over death and the grave. ([1 Corinthians 15:54-57](#)) A tomb full of bones reminded the Israelites of their hope for the promised land. An empty tomb is our reminder of a home in heaven for those who have come to faith in Christ. Thanks be to God!

Prayer of Response

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I understand, believe, desire, or do?

·Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at

Next week's sermon text: we turn to [Genesis 24:1-67](#) "An Old Testament Love Story"
