

My father is a wonderful man. He is brilliant and hard working.

He spent his career as a professor of physics at the University of Illinois.

He is a man of many interests and hobbies. He is careful and loving and generous, and really good at figuring things out.

My mother is even more amazing, but I'm not going to talk about her right now.

I am pleased to be like my father in many ways... not in all of this, but some of it.

However, my father is a sinful man and over the years I have been able to see it.

My father never led his boys in Bible Study, never sat with us in times of prayer.

He never blessed me as the patriarchs blessed their sons... like we saw in Genesis 48 last week.

My father is very particular and finicky sometimes. He gets bothered by the dumbest things.

Do you know what? I am like my father in his weaknesses and sins as well.

Furthermore, I see now that in so many ways, how he has lived has shaped who I am... and it still is.

Do the lives of your parents determine who you will be? No.

If you choose, you can be different than your parents, for better or for worse.

But, I think of my father's life as a constant gravitational pull on my own.

I can resist it. I can resist it in specific ways, and I need to in some ways.

But, the truth remains...

Your actions affect the lives of your descendants.

How you live shaped how they will live... and how you live is NEVER done until the Lord removes you from this earth.

Never can you say, "Well, shoot. I've messed up. I've messed my family up. It's hopeless. I'm going to quit trying."

If you are on this earth, you are not yet done!

This morning we are going to look at 5 sons of Jacob who became fathers. We'll take two of them together.

In each case we will see how the way that they lived their lives will affect their descendants after them.

Their father will speak a prophecy over each one of them to this effect.

We're not going to spend much time on the other 7 sons. Those prophecies are a little less clear and we just don't have the time.

Read Gen 49:1-27

I. Ruben

vss. 1-4

We see from the text that Reuben is the oldest and therefore ought to have first place among all the brothers.

But, no, he will not. Why?

Because he cannot control himself.

Now, have any of you children here ever heard from your parents that they're trying to teach you to control yourself?

You ought to thank them! "Yes daddy, please. Teach me to control myself."

The fruits of the Spirit... **Galatians 5:22-23**

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Self-control is so important for the person who wants to walk with God.

Now, Ruben's lack of self-control had a particular result. (vs. 4)

Now things are embarrassing... and that is exactly right. Embarrassment is what lack of self-control does to you.

What his father is referring to is found back in **Genesis 35:22**.

So, it is sexual sin along with disrespect for his father that now looms over all of Reuben's family.

We live in a culture that says that sex is just something that you can have with anybody. It's just a physical things...

...like hugging a dog or working out or drinking a glass of water.

Well, you can't get someone pregnant by drinking a glass of water.

Sex is a union of two people. It is meant to bind you together for life.

If you cannot control yourself and have sex with someone who is not your wife... you reap disaster.

And, the disaster is not just for you... but for your children and your children's children yet to come.

I've seen it myself... broken homes, fathers unable to tell their boys to be gentlemen, sons and grandsons out of control.

II. Simeon and Levi

vss. 5-7

What was wrong with Simeon and Levi?

Three times in these three verses we find the word "anger" or "wrath."

They are called violent, fierce, and cruel. They did what they wanted... not listening to others.

And their anger led to murder.

We find the story back in Genesis 34. The men of Shechem had mistreated their sister. So, their anger was justified. Right?

Well, we shall see. They make a deal with the men of Shechem that if they all get circumcised...

then Shechem, the prince of the town (he had a self-control problem too) can marry their sister.

We pick up the story after they are all circumcised... **Genesis 34:25-31**.

These two men slaughtered them all! Why? Because they were angry. They committed murder.

James 1:19-20 Beware of your anger. You'll always think you are justified in it... but you rarely are.

You might say, "Well... I get angry, but I would never commit murder." Oh really?

Jesus says otherwise. **Matthew 5:21-26**

This is what happens to these brothers and their families... they are going to be separated from their father, maybe for all eternity.

They are going to be scattered and dispersed eventually... all because they let their anger get the better of them.

Now, we have two more sons who are father to look at... and things are going to be much brighter from here on out. But, I'd like to take the last (or second to last) brother first. Joseph.

III. Joseph

vss. 22-26

Joseph receives a fantastic blessing... in this he is distinguished among his brothers.

He and his family are going to enjoy amazing blessings... blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They will have blessings of land, of good wives and children...

Blessings from the deep (the sea or the earth).

Blessings of heaven above.

Blessings from God who will be their helper.

That sounds pretty good! Why?

It is because Joseph trusted God and was fruitful. His life impacted others.

It is because of the way he lived that he overcame betrayal and attack.

He had been sold into slavery by his jealous brothers... they wanted to kill him.

When he was a slave, he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. She lied about him to do him in.

He had been thrown into prison by his boss, Potiphar, when Potiphar probably knew that he was innocent.

But, Joseph made it through all that and even became stronger. Why?

Because he clung to his God, God almighty, and to the promises of God.

Psalm 55:22 Do you believe this? That God will hold onto you if you hold onto Him?

Do you know this even when things are the bleakest, when all seems hopeless, when you want to give up?

When it seems that God has abandoned you, when enemies surround you. Do you know this? Joseph did.

Isaiah 50:4-10 If you do, you will be blessed.

IV. Judah

vss. 8-12

I have saved Judah for last because he is perhaps the most interesting... and the most surprising.

Ruben, Simeon, and Levi do not fare well because of their sin.

Joseph is a wonderful example of righteousness... and so he is blessed.

But, Judah is a mixed bag... but, I think you will see... the best bag.

His brothers will eventually praise him and shall bow down to him. Really? I thought that was Joseph... but no. It is Judah.

He's like a lion crouching, dangerous to be roused. No, actually like a lion's cup crouching... or sleeping.

What does this mean? What is the point of this strange picture of a crouching lion's cup?

It is dangerous? Is it powerful? Is it fearsome? Is it cute? Is it lion king?

What is the point of a lion cup crouching down in the grass?

Potential.

Someday the cub will be the king of the beasts.

The rest of the text helps us understand just what Jacob is saying, whether he understands it all or not.

vs. 10 "the scepter... the ruler's staff" = there's going to be a king.

And, then we learn His name... "Shiloh" = The name refers to a man of peace who owns the scepter who will be sent.

This ruling man of peace will extend His rule to all the peoples.

Do you know who this is? Of course you do. It is Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus who will come from the tribe of Judah... spoken and written before anyone knew hardly anything about Him.

vs. 11 He ties up his donkey = you know what that is all about... when the humble king will ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.

"He washes His garments in wine" = a picture of prosperity, and victory over His enemies.

Revelation 19... when Jesus returns to win the great victory on earth and gather us all to Himself...

and take us all to be in His New Heavens and New earth forever.

vs. 12 "His eyes darker than wine, teeth white like milk" = He is one handsome, kingly dude.

This is what Jacob is prophesying over Judah.

The great handsome, Messianic king of all the world... He's coming, and He's coming from you, Judah.

He's crouching like a lion's cub, full of promise and potential. Someday He will spring onto the scene and grow up!

Why? And, why to Judah? it is because in Judah's life we have seen something that we have not seen in any of the others.

Redemption.

Judah has been a picture of it.

In Genesis 37, Judah was the one who suggested selling Joseph into slavery.

In Genesis 38, Judah was the one who would not provide for his daughter-in-law, Tamar... and then he slept with her.

But, then he began to see his sin. He said about her, "She is more righteous than I."

And, then in Genesis 44, when he finally saw Joseph again, and didn't know it was Joseph...

He offered himself as a slave in Benjamin's place so that he would not sin like that again.

God had humbled him and he had been redeemed, rescued, saved from sin.

It is this very message that is the center of what Shiloh. this peaceful king, will bring. **Luke 7:36-50**

This is what it means to be a Christian, to be a follower of Jesus. It does not mean that you will begin perfectly sinless.

But, that, Jesus will take your sins upon Himself, forgive you, give you His righteousness, and make you to love Him.