

Series: Stand Fast In the Lord

# WHERE HE LEADS I'LL FOLLOW

## GENESIS 46

Text:

Introduction:

In Genesis chapter 46 we find Jacob and his family packing up and leaving their home to go and live with Joseph in the land of Egypt.

No doubt it seemed like a strange turn of events for the old man Jacob. He knew that God had promised the land of Canaan to him, his father, Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham before him.

Now it seemed that God was leading him away from the Promised Land, into the strange and foreign land of Egypt.

Yet, in this chapter God would assure Jacob that where He guided him He would go with him; and that His plans for His people in Egypt were ultimately for their good and His glory.

As we seek to follow the Lord in this life, there are turns and transitions, changes and challenges that don't always make sense to us at the time.

Yet, God calls us simply to go where He leads us and to trust that His plan is right. Whenever He leads us we must follow, and wherever He leads us is exactly the place we need to be.

Looking over this chapter, we are reminded of several truths regarding God's leadership in the lives of His people. First of all, we see here that:

## **1. GOD LEADS US WITH THE PROMISE OF HIS SUPPORT**

At the close of chapter 45, Jacob had expressed his determination to travel to Egypt. He said:

### **Genesis 45:28**

<sup>28</sup> And Israel said, ***It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.***

As chapter 46 begins, we find Jacob stopping on the border of Canaan, in the familiar place of Beersheba. Once there, the Bible says that Jacob:

### **Genesis 46:1**

<sup>1</sup> And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and ***offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.***

Maybe Jacob just wanted to worship a while before moving on. Or, maybe, he wanted to make sure that he was doing the right thing.

Either way, at the border of the Promised Land that Jacob was leaving behind God spoke to his old servant and assured him that he was headed in the right direction.

### **Genesis 46:2-3**

*<sup>2</sup> And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. <sup>3</sup> And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: **fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:***

That “fear not” was followed by promises to encourage Jacob’s heart. Those promises speak to us of the precious promises we too have from God in our own journey.

For instance, notice that God gave to Jacob:

#### **A. The Guarantee of His Presence**

Many years before, when Jacob was fleeing the land of Canaan heading to his Uncle Laban’s house, the Lord had appeared to him at the top of an angel-covered ladder.

In Genesis 28:15, God gave Jacob this promise:

**Genesis 28:15**

<sup>15</sup> And, behold, ***I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest***, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Now, as Jacob is once again leaving his homeland behind, God repeats the promise of His presence.

**Genesis 46:4**

<sup>4</sup> ***I will go down with thee into Egypt***; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

Like Jacob, we too have the guarantee of our Lord's presence with us.

**Matthew 28:20**

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, ***lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*** Amen.

If you belong to Jesus, then no matter where you are, He is with you!

Quote:

As He leads you along, He never leaves you alone.

Those that follow His commands enjoy His company.

He walks with those who walk according to His will.

As He leads us, He guarantees us His presence.

Furthermore, as God promised His support to Jacob, we see not only the guarantee of His presence, but He also promised:

### B. The Glory of His Plan

Jacob might have been wondering what God was up to leading him and his family down into Egypt, but God wasn't a bit confused.

He had a plan.

Notice what He told Jacob in verse 3.

#### **Genesis 46:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: **fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:***

Look again at verse 4, and notice what else the Lord said to Jacob.

## **Genesis 46:4**

<sup>4</sup> ***I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.***

God said, “You are going down to Egypt, but one day I will get you back up to Canaan.

And, Jacob, when you leave this life, your long-lost son Joseph will be there to close your stilled eyes.”

Jacob had to know that at his age he would likely die in Egypt.

For a boy from Canaan, where his mom, dad, and beloved wife were all buried, the sands of Egypt were not where he wanted his bones to rest.

But God’s promise to Jacob was this, “You may die in Egypt, but Egypt is not where you will end up.

I will get you back to the Promised Land, where I promised you’d be.”

Don’t miss this!

We may not know exactly where God will lead us in this life, but we know exactly where He will lead us in the life that is to come.

God's promise to us in the gospel is eternal life through His Son, Jesus, and regardless of where we leave this world we know where we are ultimately going!

If God were to lead you to other side of the planet, and you died in the middle of an African jungle, His plan for you wouldn't end there!

He has promised you glory on the other side of the grave.

For that reason, wherever He leads you in this life, you can follow Him without any doubts of where He will take you in eternity.

As Jacob's and his family made their way down to Egypt, I can almost hear him singing:

*I have a hope that will surely endure,  
After the passing of time,  
I have a future in heaven for sure,  
There in those mansions sublime*

As God leads us, He promises to support us all the way home.

Looking further at this chapter, we realize that God's leadership was not just of Jacob, but of his family as well.

With that we are reminded that as we follow God, not only does He lead us with the Promise of His Support, but notice also that:

## 2. GOD LEADS US FOR THE PROGRESS OF HIS SAINTS

Look again at the close of verse 3.

As God assured Jacob of His plan for the journey to Egypt, He said:

### **Genesis 46:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for **I will there make of thee a great nation:***

This move to Egypt wasn't just about Jacob.

It was about his descendants, the children of Israel.

We are reminded here that even as God works with us individually, He is also working with all of us corporately as His people.

As God leads you, He is also leading all of His people, and working in us as a body (that is, His church) to get us to where He wants us to be.



Consider this principle as we see it in this text.

Consider with me first of all:

A. Where His People Begin

Look back at our text and notice verse 5. It says:

**Genesis 46:5**

*<sup>5</sup> And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.*

Verse 7 then adds:

**Genesis 46:7**

*<sup>7</sup> His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.*

The next several verses list the descendants of Jacob; his children and grandchildren.

All told there were somewhere around 70 of them.

Illustration:

I can't help but get the image of the Clampetts, loaded up in Uncle Jed's truck, rolling into Beverly Hills.

The family of Jacob was little more than a bunch of goat herders, leaving the pastures of Canaan to live beside the pyramids of Egypt.

They were a handful of refugees coming to live among the thousands of the world's superpower.

That was where God's people began.

It is reminder of the kind of beginnings we read about in the New Testament.

Gathered around the Lord were a dozen or so rough-handed fishermen and common Jewish men – unlikely apostles and preachers of the gospel.

Note 1 Corinthians 1:26:

**1 Corinthians 1:26**

<sup>26</sup> *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

As we look around at one another, we have little to boast in.

We are not a great number, and what we do have is not anything the world would find all that impressive.

That is where God's people begin.

But as we look at God leading his people in this text we are reminded not only of where His people begin, but also of:

## B. What His People Become

Note again in verse 3, the first promise God made to Jacob as he set out for Egypt was this:

### **Genesis 46:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; **for I will there make of thee a great nation:***

This is the same promise God had been making since the days of Abraham.

God intended to take the few and feeble descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and transform them into a great nation.

The 70 or so that followed Jacob down into Egypt would one day be a vast multitude of redeemed people following Moses out of Egypt by the same way they had once come in.

In a similar way, right now God is building His people in this pilgrim world, calling them together from every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation.

And the day is coming when His people, the blood-bought Church of the living God, are going to be called out of this world to join our Lord Jesus!

The church may not look like much to the world around us, but we are God's people, and He has big plans for us.

As He leads us through this world, though it may not always be clear, we are making progress.

God leads us with the Promise of His support, and God Leads us for the Progress of His Saints.

Notice with me thirdly in this chapter that:

### **3. GOD LEADS US TO THE PROXIMITY OF HIS SON**

Remember, the whole reason Jacob and his family are headed to Egypt is to be with Joseph, whom God had exalted there for the purpose of saving his family.

As we have seen in previous chapters, Joseph is a wonderful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recognizing that, God led his people then in order to get them closer to Joseph.

Likewise, God leads us today in order to get us closer to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice this with me in the text.

God led Jacob and his family to Egypt, in proximity to Joseph, first of all:

#### **A. To Enjoy His Fellowship**

After the lengthy genealogy in this chapter, we are told of Jacob's arrival in Egypt. It is a wonderful scene.

Note: Genesis 46:29

### **Genesis 46:29**

*<sup>29</sup> And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.*

Imagine Joseph pulling up in his royal chariot, and hopping out to run and meet his elderly father.

Imagine Jacob, crying aloud, “Joseph my long lost son!”

After a good cry, Jacob said:

### **Genesis 46:30**

*<sup>30</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*

Jacob sounds like old Simeon in the New Testament, after seeing the baby Jesus.

Seeing Joseph fulfilled his life!

Part of God’s reason for sending Jacob to Egypt was simply to let him see that son, and enjoy his last days in fellowship with Joseph.

That is part of the promise back in verse 4.

### **Genesis 46:4**

*<sup>4</sup> I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.*

As believers today, God leads us in ways that will draw us closer to His Son, and part of the reason for that is simply because He wants us to experience the joy of seeing Him and knowing Him.

God is constantly leading us closer to His Son, not only to enjoy His fellowship, but also:

#### **B. To Experience His Favor**

As the chapter closes, Joseph tells Jacob and his brethren what He is going to do for them now that they are with him in Egypt.

Notice verse 31:

### **Genesis 46:31**

*<sup>31</sup> And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;*

Joseph goes on to explain how he will help to secure the land of Goshen, the most fertile land in Egypt, for the sake of his family.

In this text, Joseph acted as a mediator for his family.

He would speak to Pharaoh on their behalf, and speak to them on Pharaoh's behalf.

Understand:

The closer we are to the Lord, the more we can enjoy His favor as both our Savior and Lord; the only Mediator between God and man.

When we live in proximity to Him, He is the One who opens up the blessings of God for us, and gives direction for enjoying those blessings as well.

Understanding the grace and favor that the Lord alone can give us, as we follow God through this life, our prayer ought to be:

*Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be*

Egypt sure must have seemed like a strange place for old Jacob to end up.

His granddaddy Abraham had gotten in trouble there, and his daddy had been stopped by God from going there.



Now, God was clearly leading him there.

Bolstered by the promises of God and the prospect of seeing Joseph, Jacob loaded up the family and followed God down into Egypt.

Close:

Reading over this text, I was reminded of a poem by Horatius Bonar, a Scottish preacher in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The poem is entitled, “Thy Way, Not Mine”.

Listen to the first two stanzas:

*Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
However dark it be!  
Lead me by Thine own hand,  
Choose out the path for me.*

*Smooth let it be or rough,  
It will be still the best;  
Winding or straight, it leads,  
Right onward to Thy rest*

God’s leadership in your life may not always make sense to you, but following Him is always best for you.

Ultimately, He wants to bring you ever closer to His Son and to the grace He alone can provide.

Therefore, trust His will, claim His promises, and say with every new day, “Wherever He leads I’ll go.”