

## **LESSONS FROM A COFFIN (Adapted from idea by Bobby Liddell)**

Many events from the life of Joseph exemplify the great faith that he had in God. You may recall the advances of Potiphar's wife toward the young, vulnerable Joseph. He maintained his purity, for he knew to give in to temptation was to sin against God (Gen.39:9). Perhaps you remember Joseph's attitude toward his brothers who had so mistreated him. His faith in God allowed Joseph to maintain an attitude of love and concern for his brothers (Gen.50:19-21). However, no other event in the life of Joseph shows his great faith in God as does the commandment he gave concerning his death (Gen.50:25,26). Many great lessons can be gleaned from the injunction Joseph gave concerning his burial.

First, it shows that Joseph's faith was not dimmed. Joseph was separated from everything and everyone he knew and loved—everyone, that is, except for God. Joseph was in an idolatrous nation where no one knew him. He could have very easily renounced his faith in God and done as he pleased, but Joseph's faith in God would not allow him to do so. He was separated from God's people, yet he was determined to please God, even if he were the only one in the whole nation who was willing to take this stand. His faith was his own. It was not inherited, and it was not reliant upon others. Because of this, Joseph did not allow circumstances that occurred throughout his life to dim his faith.

Second, the commandment Joseph gave concerning his death shows that his heart was in Canaan even though he was in Egypt. Joseph could see past the adversity. He knew that the things he had endured were not the end of it all. Through the eye of faith Joseph could see the unseen. In his heart, Joseph longed for that land that God had promised to His people (Gen.12:1-3). Although Joseph did not know when this would take place, he knew that it would happen. God promised it would be so, and in Joseph's heart that settled it. Joseph knew he was but a stranger in a strange land, a citizen of the land of Canaan, merely passing through Egypt.

Third, the commandment Joseph gave concerning his death serves as a reminder. It reminds us that God is faithful to keep His promises. Joseph's coffin is a reminder that we are all mortal. Despite this fact, Joseph's coffin reminds us that there is hope of life beyond this life. Joseph's coffin reminded Israel that Egypt was not their home, and it reminds us that this world is not our home. Joseph's coffin serves as a reminder that we need to be patient. It took over 215 years for Joseph's command concerning his death to be fulfilled! Every time the children of Israel saw Joseph's coffin, or walked past his tomb, they were reminded of these things. Joseph faced the hardships of life with an unwavering faith, and he faced death with the same great faith. What a great lesson in faith for all of us!

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