

Genesis Chapter 23

Faithful Death

I. Jesus had a clear understanding of death. It's not the end of life.

A. He corrected the Sadducees regarding resurrection. Mark 12:26-27.

1. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.
2. *These "dead" believers are not dead...*

B. *Good to know! Because we are attending a funeral today...*

II. The death of Sarah prompts Abraham in two ways. Gen. 23.

A. His genuine grief. 1-2

1. First mention of Abraham mourning/weeping
2. Hebrew "saphad" = to wail, mourn, loud crying.
3. Hebrew "bakah" = weep, cry
4. She is 127 years old (the only woman whose lifespan is recorded)
 - a) Isaac is 37 years old. She died 3 years before Isaac married Rebekah.
 - b) Abraham lived another 38 years.

B. His faithful purchase. 3-20

1. Machpelah, a field and cave in Hebron (formerly Kiriath Arba).
 - a) Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob buried there (50:13)
2. Purchased. This gives legal ownership of the land to Abraham and his family. This is a big deal, which is why he paid so much for it and refused to simply receive it as a "gift". He wanted legal papers that showed his actual ownership.
 - a) Ordinarily a "sojourner" (resident alien) was not able to buy land.

III. Why this detailed story of Sarah's death and the purchase of Machpelah?

A. To show that Abraham's new identity was in the promised land.

1. Normally a "sojourner" would go back to the ancestral land.
2. Abraham says, No. I have a new identity and a new home... God's Promise.

B. To show that Abraham's faith was grounded in God's promises (Land).

1. Literally "buying into" the promised land. Putting his money where his faith was.
2. The knowledge of God is grounded in His Word, His Promises.

C. *It's not simply that he buried her in Canaan, it's that He buried her in faith.*

IV. Closing Thoughts on Death...

A. It sobers us up in this life. Ecc.7:1-4

1. Sorrow and grief bring a kind of deep wisdom that no other experiences provide. It means that we have taken sin seriously. Gen.3:19; Rom.5:12-
2. Death reminds us that sin is a real thing—and so is repentance and forgiveness.
 - a) The Lord says that death is the result of sin.
 - b) *Our world doesn't know why death happens. Because it doesn't believe in God or sin.*
3. If sin is unforgiven, it has devastating results in this life and the next.
 - a) There is death after this life, the second death. **Rev.20:14**

B. It makes us look beyond this life. 2 Cor.4:16-5:8

1. For the Big Answers. Philosophy cannot solve death.
 - a) Philosophy will try to remove the *fear of death* through unaided human reason, but it cannot *solve death itself*—only the Lord can do that, and only through the gospel.

C. It encourages us to invest this life. 2 Cor.5:9-10

1. Not investing IN this life, but investing this life in something else.
2. Whatever the Lord give us to do here, we do it under his guidance and for his glory.

D. It reminds us to release this life to the Lord. Col.3:1-4

1. Death is past tense for a Christian!!

E. Because it has been defeated by the Lord. Rev.1:18

1. He alone has the keys...

V. This is what Baptism symbolizes. Our death, burial, and resurrection in Christ.

A. His death becomes yours; His life becomes yours; His destiny becomes yours.