Today’s message is the conclusion of the series Standing on God’s Promises. The past few weeks, we have studied Joseph’s of Egypt journey and his actions reflecting the character of a good steward. Although he suffered great hardship and challenges, we have learned that he remained faithful to his faith and character. Through his life story, we can see even though we may go through difficult times, God keeps his promises to his people and gives us victory and vindication over time.

For this last message, we are going to learn about Joseph’s legacy. Good stewardship is like seeds we plant today so we can have a future tomorrow. So, good stewardship is not only about our present well-being but also what we leave behind for those who come after us. Think of your family, church, and your life accomplishments and ask the question: What legacy of faith and life will I leave after my time? What memories and stories will my family and friends remember of me?

For this message, we are reading Genesis 50:22-26,

“So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father’s household; and Joseph lived one hundred ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph’s knees. Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” So Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, “When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here.” And Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.”

This is the way the book of Genesis ends, with Joseph reminding his family about the promise God made to them in their father Abraham, “I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” By saying this, Joseph wanted to make sure his family remembered who they were and their purpose in life.

To understand what this means, we need to learn the context of this promise. In this book of Genesis, we read first about God’s creation, the sin of human beings, the consequences of evil in the world (brothers killing brothers), the flood and the ark of Noah, and then we arrive at the story of Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah are the great grandparents of Jacob’s children—Joseph and his brothers. To Abraham, God said, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” (Genesis 12:1-2)

This is what is known as the “blessing of Abraham” through the covenant God made with him, which is, in essence, the beginning of God’s plan of salvation for all people. It is through Abraham’s descendants that Jesus came, hence the promise of “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3) So, this promise is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and what did for all of us.

Why is this significant? Last week, I shared with you how Joseph forgave his brothers after they had betrayed him by selling him into slavery and lying to their father, telling him wild beasts killed him. He was the most powerful man in Egypt after Pharaoh—he could do whatever he wanted. He could easily have said, “I don’t need them; they are dead to me,” and take revenge. But, instead, he saved them.

The promise God gave to Abraham and Sarah about being a blessing to all the families of the earth could not have been fulfilled if Joseph had taken a different approach in dealing with his family. The nation of Israel is made up of Joseph’s family—including ten of his brothers. So, if there was no family, there was no story anymore, no descendants, and no Jesus—at least not in the way we understand it today.

What does this mean to us, mainly as we speak about Standing on God’s Promises and Stewardship? It means that no matter what part of Joseph’s life we look at, whether he as a teenager obeying his father, a young man resisting sexual temptation, a prisoner working hard for the jail custodian, or a governor ruling in the land of Egypt, Joseph always made the effort of living a life that honored God. Because of that, he left a legacy that blesses each one of us even today. We are here today because Joseph did not forget who he was and the promises of God made to his family.

So, this is not just a story we tell; this is the past, our past that makes us who we are today as disciples of Jesus. We, too, are part of this legacy of promise and blessing. I mean, do you know you are part of Abraham’s family too? Do you know you are children of the promise, meaning you are a fulfillment of God’s promise? You are the people who have been blessed by the promise God made to Abraham and, because of that, you too are part of this life-giving journey.

Let me explain briefly.

The apostle Peter, in the Book of Acts chapter 3:25, preached his first sermon and said this to the people listening to him, “You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Then the apostle Paul also said in the letter to the church in Galatia, “Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” so, you see, those who believe [in Christ] are the descendants of Abraham. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:6, 29)

Peter and Paul are saying that by our faith in Jesus Christ, we are also adopted into Abraham’s family, so we share in his blessing and legacy of being a blessing to others. We are heirs of Abraham, and we stand on what God promised to him. Like them, at times we may be a big dysfunctional family, yet we are blessed if we don’t forget who we are and honor God as good stewards of all we are, do, and have.

What a great thought, isn’t it? Abraham’s, Isaac’s, Jacob’s, and Joseph’s legacy brought us here. All of them made choices, sometimes good ones, other times shameful ones, but it was their ability to remain faithful and seek and come back to God when they would get lost that kept them going.

When I look at these big pictures of life journeys and legacies, it baffles me how God gives us so much power to decide what to do with our lives—even more so as our decisions affect others. God blessed Abraham and Sarah, but it was not only up to them but their children to carry on with their calling to bless “all the families of the earth.”

That is who we are. That is the promise on which we stand. That is the blessing we get to pass on. That is the legacy we are a part of to continue to build the kingdom of God.

As you can see, all of us have a higher calling not only to make things better today as good stewards but, most importantly, to pass on the legacy of faith and blessing to those that come after us.

My friends, here is our challenge and opportunity to carry on with this incredible life-giving legacy: we need to know and not forget who we are as people of God. Every day we have the freedom to make choices that will either improve or dimmish our life, that will either improve or dimmish the life of those around us. This has to do with our attitude towards life, how we treat others, and what we focus on and do with our time, money, and everything we have. Therefore, one of the best things that can happen to us is to understand we are heirs of the blessing of God, that we stand on the promise of God to Abraham as blessed people that blesses others. If you did not know this, now you do.

All this to say, as those who stand on God’s promise of life and as the good stewards of God’s blessings we are called to be, it is the good choices stacked upon one another over time that build a legacy. So, what we choose to do today is the kind of future we will have tomorrow.

As you may see by now, the purpose of this stewardship campaign was not only about reminding us how to give to support the work of our church but also to remind us of why we do it: to build the kingdom of God by sharing the blessing of Jesus with them. If we know the “Why” we do it we will remember the “Who” we are.

I want to finish by asking you to take the questions I asked at the beginning and think about them every day for the rest of your life: What legacy of faith and life will you leave after your time? What memories and stories will your family and friends remember of you?