



BENJAMIN: SORROW TO STRENGTH

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Libin Abraham

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Libin Abraham 0:00

A few weeks ago, our family was heartbroken by a story of a couple we had heard about in Atlanta, and a lot of individuals in my family actually knew this couple, but this couple, here's a picture of them, they just had their dream wedding, they were a beautiful, godly couple, and their wedding was a worship service, and people said, man, we could tangibly feel the Holy Spirit in the presence of God. It was everything you would imagine a perfect wedding to be, with all of your friends and hundreds of guests and family gathered from all around to celebrate this amazing moment. And as the reception concluded, the husband, who is a Delta pilot, had a surprise for everybody. He had his pilot buddy bring a helicopter, and even as a surprise to his wife, they were going to get flown into their hotel location that nobody else knew about, but he kept it a surprise. So, sure enough, as the reception concludes, helicopter lands outside the reception venue, and people were so excited to see this, and everyone came outside, and the couple jumped into the helicopter, but as they got into the helicopter, rain began to fall, and the husband said, "You know, I don't feel great flying in low visibility, so let's just wait a little while, and they waited 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and everybody outside still in the rain waited with their cameras out to get the perfect video for Instagram reels and eventually the pilot said, Hey, I feel good about us taking off. I've flown in conditions like this before. We can get into a high enough altitude and be safe on the storm, so we're good. Let's take off. And they took off. Friends and family waved goodbye, and the newlywed couple were off in the air. The helicopter flew for about five minutes before they crashed. Family and friends of this couple had gone home, assuming they had reached their destination safely. They were having the time of their life. Only they wake up, and the moms begin to text each other and said, "Have you heard from either of our kids? And they're like, "No, we haven't heard. And about 3045 minutes later, they learned the unthinkable. They were contacted by a local hospital, who let them know that the bride had been admitted. So they inquired about the groom, and they said he died in the crash, along with the pilot, and so this family has just gone from a moment of celebration and joy into tragedy and sorrow, and everyone who came in town for that wedding on a Friday a few weeks ago, they just stayed an extra week and did his funeral the following Friday. Everything changed in a matter of moments, and I think about this newly married wife. She lost her husband just minutes laying on her, just minutes after their dream wedding. It's amazing how quickly celebration can turn into tragedy and joy into sorrow. Some people ask me often, what's the hardest thing about pastoral ministry? And for me, the hardest thing is it just to grieve with those who grieve and then rejoice with those who rejoice. The hardest part of ministry is rejoicing and grieving at the same time, learning to hold both of these at the same time, because you could be celebrating with a family who's welcoming a newborn baby and rejoicing in that, and just days later standing next to a casket saying goodbye to somebody you love, you could be doing a wedding, and it's a moment of joy, and then a few days later, or maybe that afternoon, meeting with a couple who's going through divorce. I've literally had Sundays where, at the end of service, I'm celebrating with somebody who's coming up to me and say, "Hey, you prayed for me six months ago for me to be healed from cancer, and look, I am cancer free, and rejoicing only then to meet the next person in line, let me know that they have just been diagnosed with cancer, learning to grieve and rejoice at the same time. In the broken world we live in, it's not really all sorrow or all joy, it's often a mixed bag of both. We find ourselves in moments where we're holding hope and heartbreak, blessing and burden, grief and peace at the same time.

Libin Abraham 4:34

And this is where we find ourselves in this next renaming story we're going to be in week one. We looked at Abraham and Sarah, who were renamed in their waiting. Then last week we looked at the story of Abraham's grandson Jacob, who was renamed in his striving, in his wrestling. Today we're going to look at the story of Jacob's son Benjamin. Who is renamed in

their grieving, in their sadness, in their tragedy. Grief is a universal language that all of us are familiar with, and you know what it is to feel sad and to have grief. And grief can happen in a variety of ways, or for a variety of reasons. Sometimes grief comes to us because we have lost some dreams or opportunities, or we're navigating infertility, or a broken marriage, or we're praying for lost sons and daughters to come home, or estranged relationships. Sometimes grief comes because of betrayal, or a diagnosis, or maybe you want to be married, and you find yourself single, and you're wondering if you're ever going to be married, or you're navigating aging parents. Grief has a variety of ways it shows up. I know you may not want to admit it to your pastor or your small group leader, but sometimes, if we're honest, we wonder where is God in the middle of our grief. Why is this happening? And we don't have any good Bible answers. We wonder where he is sometimes, even like this Atlanta couple. Grief tragedy comes just at the heels of a good day, or of a celebration. This is where we are in Genesis chapter 35 We find Jacob and Rachel at the birth of one of their sons, and notice how Genesis 35 begins with this climactic celebratory moment of Jacob meeting with God. Verse nine begins like this: God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Pat and Aram, and he blessed him. What a moment where Jacob is blessed by God. God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob. You will no longer be named Jacob, but your new name will be Israel. Now we looked at that moment last week from Genesis 32 where God, for the first time, gives Jacob a new name, and so Jacob gets a pretty good upgrade. He goes from hill grabber and supplanter to Israel, God prevails, and here God reminds him of his new name, just to make sure Jacob got it, and so God says to him, now he named him Israel. Now, what's unique about this moment is God doesn't just rename him, God gives him promise and blessing in the renaming, God also said to him, I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply, a nation indeed, an assembly of nations will come from you, and kings will descend from you. I will give to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, and I will give the land to your future descendants. Then God withdrew from him at the place where he had spoken to him. Jacob set up a marker at the place where he had spoken to him, a stone marker. He poured a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. Jacob named the place where God had spoken to him Bethel, where God spoke with him. He named it Bethel. What a mountaintop experience. What a milestone moment for the God of the universe to visit with Jacob and say, Jacob, you're no longer Jacob, by the way, you're Israel, and from you, Israel will come kings and rulers. From you will come nations, not just nations, but assembly of nations will come through you. You'll have this promised land that I promised to Abraham, and one after another, God begins to bless and make promise with Jacob. This moment is so great that Jacob begins to worship. He sets up an altar, gives God an offering. He even names his place, he calls it Bethel, which means the house of God. Jacob forever wanted to remember, this is where I met God. This is where He shared His presence and His blessing and His promise with me. I don't ever want to forget this moment. It's the house of God where I met Him, and you would imagine having met with God in this kind of way. Jacob would just live happily ever after.

Libin Abraham 9:22

That's what you expect at the end of a moment like that. Jacob, this is when you go on book tour and talk about how you met God at Bethel, but that's not what happens after this profound encounter with God. Tragedy strikes. It's actually good for us to recognize this, because sometimes when tragedy strikes and when crisis happens, we wonder if it's because God has left us. We wonder if it's because God is mad at us, and yet this story teaches us that God can be very present with you in your life. And life can still be hard. Here's what he's saying: God's presence with us does not exempt us from life's sorrows. Tragedy and crisis can happen to the righteous and the unrighteous. You could be walking with God, getting your Bible reading perfectly right, and still have tragedy, just like the person down the road from you who doesn't even know God, and there may be some of you sitting in this room or online today, and you're thinking, man, I'm going through this thing, this crisis, this issue in my life, maybe God has abandoned me and God has left me, maybe it's a result of something that I did, maybe it's something that has been passed down from my generations, but here's what I'm saying. Life's sorrow happens to all of us. We can't equate the presence of God and the love of God with the circumstances of our life. And here is Jacob, having just met with God, and yet tragedy is on the way. And here's a tragedy that begins to happen. They set out from Bethel when they were still some distance from Ephrath. Rachel began to give birth, and her labor was difficult. Let me just pause here and remind us who remind us of who Rachel is. Rachel is one of Jacob's two wives. That's another sermon for another day. Okay, but Rachel is his favorite. He is the love of his life. The Bible says when he first met Rachel, man, he began to weep because he was overcome with emotions of love, and he began to thank God and worship God because he met Rachel. He would work seven years for Rachel, and then Laban tricked him and gave him her sister instead. And then finally he would get Rachel, and then work another seven years, but the Bible says all of those many years felt like a few days, because of how much Jacob loved Rachel. I imagine he was writing songs to her, writing poems. He was head over heels for Rachel, but Rachel was also barren for many years, and she sees Leah having child after child, and she grows resentful, she has this deep unmet longing, and she prays to God for kids, and she even tells Jacob one time, "Give me kids or I'll die, what's the use of my life? essentially it's what she's saying, and then finally God opens her womb, and she has her

first son, his name is Joseph, and you know the story of Joseph, and then many years go by, and no more kids, so Rachel prays and longs for another son, and then God reopens her womb, and here He is giving, here she is giving birth to her second son. That's the story we're in of Rachel giving birth to her second son, but notice what's happening, she began to give birth. Her labor was difficult, and during her difficult labor, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son. With her last breath, for she was dying, she named him Ben Oni, but his father called him Benjamin, so Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. Jacob set up a marker on her grave. It is the marker at Rachel's grave still today. Today Jacob and Rachel have the son, but while she delivers the son, Rachel dies. The very blessing she longed for became the place of her deepest sorrow, and here Jacob and Rachel are finding themselves with a blessing and a heartache and a heartbreak. Rachel knows she's about to have a son. This is what she prayed for and longed for, and at the same time she knows she's having her final few breaths, because giving life to the Son is going to take life from her.

Libin Abraham 14:09

Jacob is grateful, he's heard the promise of God that from you will come kings and rulers, and now he is welcoming the 12th tribe of Israel, it's a good moment, but the 12th tribe, the 12th son, comes at the cost of losing his beloved Rachel, experiencing heartache in the midst of a good thing. It was Jamie Anderson who once said, grief is love with nowhere to go. Grief is love with nowhere to go. CS Lewis put it like this: the pain I feel now is the happiness I had before. The pain I feel now is the happiness I had before, because I miss what I had before. That's grief. Life, that's pain, and here Rachel, she's long for this child, he's here, but she won't get to raise him. Jacob longs for the son, but he's losing the love of his life. Notice here, at the birth of the son, the son gets named not once, but how many times? Twice. Rachel, in her pain, in the difficulty of labor, she names the son Ben Oni, which means son of sorrow. Other translations will say son of affliction, or suffering. That's what Benoni means, sorrow, affliction, and suffering. And we understand this. Rachel is not being untrue. This is difficult, this is painful, this is sorrowful. So, when she sees her pain and feels it, she names the son Son of my sorrow, and that is true. She named the son through the lens of her pain. She called his future through the lens of her pain, and we do the same thing. She's not a bad person for doing this, because I do this and you do this. We can often name our future by our present pain, that pain and affliction become the lens through which we see the future, and maybe you are experiencing some loneliness, but you've named yourself after your pain, and so you're not just experiencing loneliness now, you feel like you're going to be alone for the rest of your life, maybe you went through some failure, but soon it wasn't just I failed, but I am a failure, and the thing that happened to you now became a name, it became your identity. Maybe tragedy has come and crisis happened, but then you determine I'm never going to have joy again, I'm always going to be sad and depressed, my heart is always going to carry this tune of sorrow. Maybe you went through a betrayal and it happened to you and it was wounding and hurtful, but then you decided I'll never trust anyone ever again. How often do we name ourselves through the pain we go through, and that's understandable. That's what Rachel's doing. She feels the pain and the sorrow, and she calls her son Ben Oni, son of my sorrow. But then Jacob steps in, and he intervenes, and he calls the same son in the same tragedy, a different name. Jacob says no, he will not be called Ben Oni, son of sorrow. He will be called Benjamin, and Benjamin means son of my right hand. And in the Hebrew, that phrase right hand means strength and power and favor and authority and blessing. So Jacob says, no, no, we're not going to call him Ben Oni, son of sorrow, but we're going to call him Benjamin, son of stress. Jacob, hear me, is not negating Rachel's sorrow or suffering, no, no, he's not deflecting the pain or denying the reality. We're told in the text that he builds a monument for her, a marker for her. He weeps, he cries, he buries, he sits in the grief and in the sorrow with Rachel, and yet what he does, though, is he doesn't name their son through the lens of pain, he names their son through the lens of promise. Jacob heard from God, the promise is given, and so, yes, he acknowledges the pain, and he weeps, and he hears the reality of Rachel's sorrow, but in a sense he's saying to Rachel, I know you feel the sorrow, but I know his story is not going to end in sorrow.

Libin Abraham 19:09

I know you feel the pain, but there is a promise on the other side that God has told us, so we're not going to name him by the pain, we're going to name him by the promise, you he does both, he meets her in her grief, and yet helps move beyond it to promise. As we love and care for people who are in pain, we must validate people's pain without surrendering hope. Pain is a reality, and we can't dismiss it. We must validate pain without surrendering hope, which means we cannot only see Ben Oni. If we only see Ben Oni, then everything is broken, everything is sorrowful, and everything seems hopeless. Plus, you can't live like that. At the same time, we must avoid what may be my temptation sometimes is, let's just get to Benjamin really fast, let's skip over the bad stuff and get to the good stuff. So, we'll say things like, hey, it'll all work out in the end, just trust God, He's got a plan, you'll be okay. Some of that might be true, but it may not be the most helpful. We must meet people in their Ben Oni moments, and then point them to their Benjamin promise. We don't ignore the pain, no, we sit in it,

we acknowledge the reality of it. Faith doesn't deny the reality, but faith does refuse to make that reality the final thing, and this is what Jacob is doing. Yes, we acknowledge the grief and the pain, but this isn't where we're going to live. We're going to live into the promise of God. And here's what Jacob is saying, and what this text is saying: sorrow may shape our story, but it does not have to define our identity. Sorrow is real, it impacts us, the hurt you ran through, the wound you carry. It's real, but it doesn't have to shape your identity. In other words, sorrow may be a chapter in your story, but it doesn't have to be the title. It may be part of your journey, it may even be a part of your definition, but it doesn't have to define you. It could be a chapter in the story, but it does not have to be your title. Maybe this week you heard some bad news, you got a diagnosis, maybe a relationship, a business didn't come through or didn't work out the way you imagined, and you're sitting here, the pain of it, and the reality of it. It is a, it is a chapter, but it doesn't have to be the title. It may shape you, but it doesn't have to define you. So, Jacob says he won't be called Benoni, he will be called Benjamin, not son of sorrow, but son of strength. Now, imagine what would have happened if the only name that stuck was Ben Oni, and I think if this son had grown up with that name, his legacy would have been different, especially in ancient times, where names and blessings mattered. It actually determined the trajectory of your life. Names and blessings matter. With our three kids, we were intentional on what we named them and how we prayed for them. Avery, who's 10 now, her name Avery means wise ruler or counselor, and so we prayed that she would be wise, discerning that she would be really kind and nurturing, and as we've seen her grow up and seen her personality, let me just tell you, that's who she is, she can discern, she is kind, she's a little mama to baby Luke, she is sweet, kind, wise, and then Liam, his name means strong-willed warrior, and this is exactly who he is. We pray that he'd be bold and courageous, and if you meet a man, he's bold like a lion, he'll just go up to strangers and strike up a conversation, he's bold, and now as he's almost seven and she's 10, we're in a season where we're actually praying the opposite prayer for each of them. We want Avery to be more bold and courageous, and so we'll have her go up to the restaurant to the waiter and ask for something just to grow in her courage, and we want Leon to be more kind and discerning, but this is not the time to say this thing you're thinking. There's another time for it. Why?

Libin Abraham 23:29

Because names and prayers and words matter, and this child born into tragedy was renamed not Son of sorrow, but son of strength, and you know what's amazing. In Benjamin's life, he became son of strength. We would have thought that because he was born to such tragedy, his whole life would be sorrowful and tragic, but actually his life became strong. Let me show you, when Jacob is older and he begins to declare final blessing over his kids. Here's what Jacob, in Genesis 49 says about Benjamin. He says, Benjamin is a wolf. He tears his prey in the morning, he devours the prey, and in the evening, he divides the plunder. All of that is imagery for strength and valor and courage. Benjamin became a strong tribe, and when you read through the book of Judges, you recognize that the tribe of Benjamin were warriors. They were the elite forces. They had the most precision, the most accurate, precise way of fighting in battle. That's who the tribe of Benjamin were. Israel has their first king, a strong king named Saul. Guess where Saul came from? From the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was a Benjamite, and for the first king of Israel to come from the tribe of Benjamin meant that his whole tribe had risen in prominence and in strength. Let me tell you, who else came from the tribe of Benjamin. We know him. We first meet him as. All of Tarsus, who then became the Apostle Paul, and when in Philippians, Paul goes through his pedigree and track record of the things that he could boast in, but chooses not to notice what he says, Philippians 35 he says, "Look, I was circumcised on the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews. Here you've got Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, one of the greatest missionaries, a man who wrote nearly half of the New Testament. He was a son of Benjamin. It's a good thing that the name that stuck was not sorrow but strength. because that's who he became. Some of you sitting in this room, and maybe online today, you're not in a season of pain or tragedy or sorrow. And praise God for that. We don't wish that on anybody, but maybe you're having a hard time identifying with Rachel or Benoni, and here's my encouragement to you: you could actually be in the position of Jacob, because notice in the text Benjamin didn't name himself, it required a Jacob to name him, even to rename him, so you may not be in a season of crisis and tragedy, but you could be walking in proximity with those who are. You could be, without even knowing it, sometimes sitting across from a Rachel or a Ben Oni. You could be the friend that shows up at the hospital when a diagnosis is given. You could be the counselor that sits across from somebody in deep pain and grief. You could be a teacher or a person in the workplace where somebody just begins to open up their heart to you. You could be a small group leader where you get a late night call and things are now looking good. You get to be Jacob in that moment. You have a sacred assignment, and your sacred assignment is to remind people of who they are when grief makes them forget who they are. Call out of people their true identity when pain and tragedy makes them forget. Let them know who they are, help them see beyond the pain into the promises of God. Help them acknowledge the Benoni moments, sit in the tension, sit in the pain, but help them see the Benjamin promise. They don't have to be defined by the pain or the sorrow, but God can do something in the sorrow. God

can move them to a future where He is at work. You have a sacred assignment. There's some of you today, perhaps your pain has named you, and you're living through a season where the name has stuck, and here's what I want you to know: you are not the pain you carry. It's a part of you, but it doesn't have to be who you are.

Libin Abraham 28:10

You are not your failure, you are not the divorce of your parents, you are not your own divorce, you are not the addiction, you are not the worst day of your life. Just like you're not the best day of your life, you are not what happened to you, you are not the betrayal, you are not the wound you carry. The Bible says you are a child of the living God. You are loved, you are forgiven, you are a new creation in Christ. God gave His son to save you. You don't have to be defined by your sin or your weakness or your brokenness. He has given you the very spirit of the resurrection to be inside of you. The very life of Christ is inside of you. So, you don't have to wear pain as a name. There's always healing. There's always hope, and you don't have to wait till you have healed from the hope, from the hurt, to find hope, you can have hope right in the middle. Rachel saw sorrow, but God saw kings and apostles coming from the sun born into tragedy. Rachel saw a funeral, God saw a future. Rachel saw the ending of her life, but God saw the beginning of a legacy. God sees what you don't yet see. He's got a plan, he's got purpose behind the pain. He doesn't cause the pain, but he also won't waste the pain. There's some beautiful gospel hints we find in this story that I think encourages you if you're wearing pain or if you're walking with people who are going through pain and grief. Here's the first gospel hint I'm going to show you, verse 19. Notice where Jacob buried Rachel. It, so Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is, say with me, Bethlehem. Bethlehem is familiar to us, isn't it? When Jacob buries Rachel in Bethlehem, he's not thinking shepherds and angels, that hasn't happened yet. He's not singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem. He's not thinking about the Christmas story. When Jacob buried Rachel in Bethlehem, Bethlehem was just a cemetery. Bethlehem was just a graveside on the side of the road. Bethlehem was the place of his tears and grief and struggle and sorrow, that's all Bethlehem was to Jacob. What Jacob didn't know, though, is that centuries later the place where he buried his beloved wife would become the birthplace of Jesus, the place of his deepest sorrow would be literally the birthplace of hope. Jacob carried a lot of sorrow that day as he laid to rest his beloved Rachel in Bethlehem, but centuries later a son would be born in Bethlehem, who would carry his sorrow. Rachel is breathing her last few breaths. She gives birth to a son, and then she dies. She's buried in Bethlehem. What she doesn't know, though, is that years later Mary would be there in Bethlehem, and a son would be born in Bethlehem. He would live, and he also would die, but he wouldn't stay dead. He would rise from the grave on the third day, and here's why: that's significant. That son, Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, would die and defeat death, so that Rachel, who was buried in Bethlehem, could experience resurrection from the dead one day, so that that tomb site would be reopened, and Rachel's body would burst forth from the ground. Why? Because Jesus, born in the same place, would defeat death once and for all. The tomb of Rachel stood as a reminder of sorrow for generations until the manger in Bethlehem stood as a sign of hope. The sorrow doesn't get the final word. The pain doesn't have the final say, but one day God will wipe away every tear, every sorrow and pain and grief will be no more. And on that day, it won't be joy and sorrow, it'll only be joy because of what Jesus has done. That's Bethlehem. The very place of burial became the birthplace of Jesus. I love how God is the master of reversal stories. The burial place became a birth story. The place that seemed hopeless and dark and sorrowful became the genesis of hope for the world, and only God could turn sorrow into salvation, and graves into gardens.

Libin Abraham 33:20

Only he can rewrite those stories, and this is also why we never give up on people, because we never know what God is preparing in Bethlehem. We never know what burial places are going to become birthplaces for something new. This is why we don't give up on people and their addiction, because we can believe that their addiction can become a powerful testimony, that that person's wound can become ministry. Your grief that you're carrying right now could actually become compassion for those who are going through the same thing you're going through. That with the comfort you receive, you could comfort others. The very place of burials and sorrow could be the birthplace of ministry, where your journey through Bethlehem and Jesus' birth in Bethlehem becomes the glimmer of hope that somebody needs. Oh, we never know what God does in the burial places, because Bethlehem will be redefined not by sorrow but by hope. Here's a second gospel hint we see, so Ben Oni means son of sorrow, and Benjamin means at the right hand. Jesus, before he entered our story 2000 years ago, and was born at Bethlehem. He started at the right hand of the Father, didn't he? He started from glory, he came from power, all dominion and glory was his. And then he took on flesh, and guess who he became, Ben Oni. He became a man of sorrows, so Isaiah 53 says in verse three, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering. Other translations will say a man of sorrows, acquainted with our grief. The CSV says he was a man of suffering, who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from. He was despised, and people didn't value him. We didn't value him. Jesus

started at the right hand and became the man of sorrow, because what happens in the incarnation is God steps into our pain, he steps into a struggle, he steps into a temptation, our suffering and our sorrow, because that was the only way to redeem our sorrow. He would go all the way to death on a cross, so that death wouldn't have the final say. God went from the right hand entered our story into sorrow, which means that the Christian story is not no sorrow. The Christian story is sorrow transformed. It's sorrow transformed because Jesus entered our sorrow, and He rose from the grave. And I think about these two names, Ben Oni and Benjamin, and they're not all that mutually exclusive. It's not sorrow or strength, it's actually sorrow that leads to strength. It's sorrow transformed, because I know some of the stories in this room, and today you are strong as a follower of Jesus, you have matured, you have grown in love for people and love for God, but you grew through the path of sorrow. We grow the most, we are strengthened when we walk the path of pain and tragedy and crisis, and the Bible says his grace is made perfect in our weakness, and it's when we are weak that we are strong, and some of you have some done some life, and you've gone through some stuff, and you would say today that the reason why we sing so joyfully is because the level of our joy is connected to the level of sorrow that God has redeemed, and God has transformed. He didn't leave us in the sorrow, He took us from sorrow to strength. Sorrow was transformed by the grace of God. Amen.

Libin Abraham 37:38

And that's what happens in the gospel story, because of Jesus, a tragedy in our sorrow is transformed, but the cool thing about Jesus' story is not only did he begin at the right hand of the Father, and then became a man of sorrows, guess where he went after he ascended, he sat at the right hand of the Father, and here's what Ephesians one would say in verse 20, he exercised his power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at the right hand in the heavens, far above every ruler, authority, power, and dominion, and every title given not only in this age but also in the one to come, and he subjected everything under his feet and appointed him as head over everything for the church at the right hand of the Father, Jesus is head over everything for you and for me, the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way. So I want you to imagine this. Where is Jesus right now? He's at the right hand of the Father, and what is he doing? He's filling the church, because if you feel sad or grief or pain, the reason why all power and authority has been given to Jesus is so that He could fill the church with the fullness of Himself, and then through the church fill the world in every way with His presence. So, do you need filling, do you need strength, do you need courage, do you need hope? Jesus, from the right hand of the Father, is pouring his life into your life, taking people from the journey of sorrow, making them strong. This is what he's doing today by His Spirit, and some of you came in full of wounds and sorrow and pain, but today I am trusting the Spirit to fill you with the power and life of Jesus. Here's the last portion I want you to just identify in the story thing. This is so powerful. Verse 21 says Israel moved on again. This is after Rachel is buried in Bethlehem. Those few words are so significant. Israel moved on again. Notice it doesn't say Jacob moved on, he. It's his new name, Jacob buried Rachel. Israel moved on again. Why is that significant? It's one of the first times that the narrator uses his new name, significant because if Jacob was left to himself, he couldn't have moved on. If all Jacob had was his human strength and ingenuity and creativity and self dependence. The weight of losing Rachel would have crushed him. He would have gotten stuck. But Israel moved on again. Why? Because he had a new name, he had a new story laced with the grace of God. Because God prevails, and because He is Israel, He doesn't have to stay stuck at the burial place of His beloved wife. He can move on, and that's not a moving on like you're forgetting, it's a moving on like you're moving forward. You're just taking the next step forward. Your heart is open to what God is doing, is what Psalms 23 says. I will walk through the valley of the shadow of death. It does not say I will live in the valley of the shadow of death. And some of you feel like you're stuck in the valley, and today I want to just prophesy, today is the moment you move on from the valley, it's the move on, it's the moving forward, it's the taking the next step. Why? Because grace has happened, and your name isn't the pain, your name isn't the tragedy. God's given you a new name, He's taken you from pain into promise. And today, friend, you can move on, and you don't move on, because the circumstance changed. Rachel didn't come back from the dead, Jacob is still grieving, but he can move on, because he trusted that God was with him in the middle of sorrow. Just stand with me. We're going to sing this song as a prayer, and my prayer is that the spirit of the living God fills you to go from sorrow to strength. It's a line of this verse that I love. It says, I was tossed in the water, but I never went under.

Libin Abraham 42:07

Some of you feel that you're like, man, I'm not just tossed in the water, I feel like I'm tossed in the fire, but you won't go under, because he's with you in the fire. It's never been a moment, never been a minute where you have been by yourself, the middle of the night, where this tragedy happens. God's there with you when He can't make sense of it all. He's standing with you. And today is a moment for you to open your heart and say, God, show me what you're doing. Take me from sorrow to strength, and if I'm wearing names from pain or from naming things in my life from tragedy. Today is the day of

renaming. Acknowledge the Ben Oni, but step into Benjamin. So, would you pray? Would you sing this together?