

Agape House of Worship
Mid-Week Bible Study
Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Topic : The Prayer of Jabez, by Bruce Wilkinson

Main Text: I Chronicles 4:9-10 NIV

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*“Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez,[a] saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” **10** And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So, God granted him what he requested.”*

Introduction: The prayer of Jabez is a short prayer about a man whose name spelled pain and grief to his mother and yet God changed his destiny because of his life and his request. 3 things we know about Jabez 1) Things started badly for him (his mother named him pain) 2) He prayed an unusual sentence prayer 3) Things ended extraordinarily well for him

Jabez was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and was highly respected by society. His simple prayer is a blue print for how as disciples we ought to pray and live out our lives

What Did Jabez Pray?

1. Why Not Ask? “Oh, that you would bless me indeed”

In other words, “bless me a lot”. What does it mean to be blessed? Psalm 1:1; Matthew 5:1-13; Genesis 12:2-3

To bless means to ask for or impart supernatural favor. Asking for blessing is asking God for something we can't get ourselves. We are asking for his wonderful, unlimited, goodness; that only God has the power to know about or give us. *“The blessing of the Lord—it makes [truly] rich, and He adds no sorrow with it [neither does toiling increase it].” Proverbs 10:22*

Jabez left it up to God to decide what the blessing would be and where, when, how Jabez would receive them. Sometimes we think because we are saved, that God's blessings sort of drizzle over our lives at a predetermined rate no matter what we do, without any extra effort required. God is telling us to ask continuously. James 4:2; Matt 7:7. When Moses asked God, “show me your glory” (Exodus 33:18). God responded by describing himself as “the Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abounding in goodness and truth.” (Exodus 34:6)

2. Living Large for God “Oh that you would enlarge my territory (borders, coast)

Jabez considered his circumstances and asked God for a bigger territory. He figured that “I was born for more than this” Ask God to enlarge your life, so that you make a greater impact for him. This means more influence, more responsibility, and more opportunity to make a mark for the God of Israel.

Ask God for the space to grow. He wants us to accept it as a significant opportunity to touch individual lives, business community and the larger world for his glory. (For example, if he is a business man, pray for expansion of the business product; If ministry, pray for an increase;

Some of us think our lives are too busy so we can't take on more so we don't ask for more responsibilities. But here is an assurance/promise: As our opportunities expand, our abilities and resources increase supernaturally as well. God is looking for those who want to do more for him. We stop short because of the arithmetic we are doing with God.

Our understanding of Ministry/Role:

My abilities + experience+ training+ my personality and appearance + my past+ the expectation of others = my assigned territory

God is saying “Not by might nor by power but my spirit, says the Lord of Host (Zech 4:6)

God's version of our territory

My willingness and weakness + God's will and supernatural power = my expanding territory.

When you ask for more ministry, influence or responsibility, God will bring opportunities and people into your path, he releases angels, resources, strength and people.

Question: What assignment is God calling you to in this season? Are you asking for increased responsibility?

3. The touch of Greatness. -Oh, that your hand will be with me.

With the expansion of the ministry, you start to feel overwhelmed by the responsibility. You feel you like unless God moves, it is impossible to go on further. The feeling is like "I am the wrong person for the job starts to set in." If you feel that the job is too big for you, then you are in the right place. It is like Peter on water. (Matt 14:22-33) Once the boundaries expand out, we get the sense of feeling out of control, so we naturally reach out. "We don't become great, we become dependent on the strong hand of God."

When we surrender our need to him, he turns that into his unlimited opportunity and he becomes great through us. **His hand represents his spirit; it also represents God's power and presence in the lives of his people**

(Joshua 4:24; Isaiah 59:1). In the book of Acts, the hand of God is attributed to the success of the church.

The presence and power of the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak and perform many miracles. (Acts 4:13; 5:29; 7:51; 9:27); Acts 4:22-31. The disciples continually asked God to fill them. (Acts 4: 22-31). Paul told the Christians at Ephesus to make it a priority to be filled with the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

Can you think of a time when you have been desperate and reached out to God? How did he respond?

Seeking God's blessing is our ultimate act of worship. Asking to do more for him is our ultimate ambition. Asking God for his hand upon us is our strategic choice to sustain and continue the great things that God has begun in our lives.

D. Keeping the Legacy Safe. Oh, that you would keep me from evil.

Jabez prayed for God's protection. He prayed that God would keep evil from him. Success brings with it; greater opportunities for failure. The greater the ministry, the more we experience the attack of the enemy. The enemy will attempt to distract, oppose, oppress and hurt us. It is pivotal that we ask God 'lead us not into temptation' and keep us away from evil (Matt 6:13). We should pray that God will keep us from moving away from him as we become too successful to pray and make time for him.

Temptations will come in many forms, it will come as "wisdom", pride, complacency, emotions and our prayer are that God will keep us from it. This is because Sin breaks our fellowship with God and the flow of his power (Isa 59:2). Temptation is not sin until we give it to it. (James 1:13-16).

In other ways can we get sidetrack from achieving our destiny/legacy?

In conclusion:

This simple prayer covers areas in our lives that is line with God's promises and word. Jesus reminds us to "ask and it shall be given unto us." So, we are to ask for God's blessings to do his work that we will continue to enlarge and increase and we are to ask for his power and presence to accomplish the task and his protection as we navigate through the world. As Jesus mandated in Matt 28:16-20. The great commission reflects this prayer.

"Go therefore and make disciples of the nations... and lo I am with you always (Matt 28:19-20)

The mandate has blessing of being a representative or ambassador also reflects how challenging the task is so he promises his blessings (favor) presence and his protection.