

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10

“And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.

10And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”

We learnt that for us to receive anything from God we must receive by FAITH because faith is the key that unlocks the promises of God in our lives and by faith we are connected to the unlimited resources that are in God.

Everything we will ever receive from God will come on the wings of faith and we learnt that for the last two Sundays.

Once we understand that it takes faith for God to download what we desire – then we must also know that it is by prayer that we make our requests known unto God.

If we do not pray we deny ourselves the opportunity to access the immeasurable resources that are in God because we vocalize our faith to God through prayer.

Prayer gives our faith a voice – without prayer we rob ourselves the opportunity to stand before God and plead our case.

James said in **James 4:2 “Ye have not because ye ask not.”**

If you do not ask in prayer you cannot receive. The Bible teaches **“ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be open for you.” Matthew 7:7.**

Our faith in God is demonstrated when we kneel down before Him with sincere hearts and ask.

God delights in us when we come before Him in prayer.

That is why we are given permission in **Hebrews 4:16** **“To come boldly into the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

Through prayer we approach the creator of universe and we invite His intervention in matters that overwhelm us.

The Bible teaches in **Jeremiah 33:3** **“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”**

When we pray we give the creator of the entire universe, the Alpha and Omega, the One in whom there is no limitation the opportunity to move into our mess and make it a message – He moves into our setbacks and makes them our comebacks.

Instead of whining, grumbling, belly aching and complaining about how bad things are why don't you kneel before God in prayer and ask Him to move.

GOD DOES NOT INTERVENE WHERE HE HAS NOT BEEN INVITED.

God is ready and willing to intervene but He needs invitation.

David declared in **Psalm 121:1** **“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help, my help cometh from the Lord who made the heavens and the earth.”**

Now in the text of **1 Chronicles 4:9-10.**

We read of a story of a man called Jabez.

Jabez the Bible teaches was more honorable than his brethren.

Yet when you go into the history of Jabez the Bible says that his mother called him Jabez because she bore him in pain.

It tells me that Jabez came from a history of pain but yet his destiny was one of honor.

I want to submit to you that where you are coming from doesn't necessarily have to be your destiny.

I came to realize in life that we don't choose where we were born but we get to choose where we live.

That is to say you might not change your history but you can change your destiny.

The pain of the past doesn't have to define the joy of the future.

Where you are coming from does not look like where you are going – the best is yet to come.

Many times we allow our past, our pain, our failure, our disappointments, our rejections to stop us from moving into destinies not knowing that many of the setbacks are just stepping-stones into our comebacks.

Jabez was born in pain but that pain did not stop him from settling into his destiny of honor.

The difference was that Jabez understood that he could shape his future through prayer.

Ladies and gentlemen you can shape your tomorrow by how you pray today.

You need to look at where you are today and make a faith confession and say "This is the lowest I will ever be, from here I go up."

Today I want us to examine the prayer of Jabez and then apply the same principles of that prayer to pray for ourselves.

Number 1;

The first thing that Jabez asked God is “Oh that you would bless me indeed.”

I like that – not that you bless me but you bless me indeed.

I know there are people who will have problems with that portion of the prayer of Jabez because they do not believe that God wants them blessed.

You know, your perception of God will many times dictate how you approach God.

God is a blessing God that is why the first thing He told Abraham when he told him to leave his father’s house He tells him in **Genesis 12:2 “And I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great and you shall be a blessing.”**

YOU must settle it in your heart that God is a blessing God and then like Jabez ask God to bless you indeed.

What does blessing mean.

To be blessed means to receive empowerment to succeed.

The blessing is divine grace that empowers a person to succeed and prosper.

Now why would God bless you – so that you in turn can be a blessing.

God want you and I to be a channel that He can use to bless others but for you to bless somebody else you must be blessed.

You see, Jabez looked at the pain and disappointment of the past and the discouragement of the present and he lifted up his hand and prayed “oh God that you would bless me indeed.”

Jabez knew that no one else was going to change his story but God; no one else was going to give him a better future but God.

No wonder God says to us in **Jeremiah 29:11** “**For I know the thoughts that I think towards you saith the Lord, they are thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope.**”

May God bless you with peace so that you will not be tormented by worry, may God bless you with good health so that you will not spend your money on doctors and hospital bills, may God bless you with good family so that you will not be lonely, desolate and forsaken.

May God bless you with good friends who will add value to your life and give you wisdom when you are stranded.

May God bless you with a good Church where you will be taught the full counsel of God.

May God bless you with financial increase so that you become a lender and not a borrower, a giver and not a taker.

May God bless you with joy unspeakable so that you can laugh in the midst of a storm and rejoice at all times.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

Right this down – GOD’S NATURE IS TO BLESS.

That is why **Deuteronomy 28:1-2** says, “**And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:**

2And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God."

And then He gives a list of the blessing to follow His people.

God is a blessing God.

Jabez understood this and he prayed "Oh Lord that you would bless me indeed."

Moses commands Aron who was a priest and his sons that after the children of Israel had brought their offering and sacrifices to the Tabernacle and worshipped as they left to go back to their homes he must speak the following blessing found in **Numbers 6:24-26** "**The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:**

25The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

26The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Number 2;

Jabez then prayed "Oh that you would enlarge my territory."

Depending on the translation the word territory can also be translated to Coast or Borders.

What was Jabez praying for? That God would enlarge his life so that he can make a greater impact.

Please don't forget that Jabez had come from a past of pain and disappointment but he still knew that there was greatness in him and that he could still do better than where he was in life.

Ladies and gentlemen, this ought to be your prayer “Lord enlarge my territory” so that God will expand your influence and give you impact so that you can touch more lives for His glory.

Child of God why do you want to be a village champion while you can be a world champion?

Stop shrinking at the thought of how much impact God can give you and ask Him to enlarge your territory.

I don't know what territory you have right now in your life, whether it is in ministry or business or career or family BUT GOD WANTS you to DARE believe that He can multiply and increase your impact and influence.

The Bible says in **Isaiah 60:22** “**A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation, I the Lord will hasten it in His time.**”

No wonder Jesus took a small boy's lunch of two fishes and five loaves multiplied it and fed five thousand people with it.

Because when you give God your little stuff, He takes it, blesses it and multiplies it so that it not only blesses you but also blesses others.

“Lord, expand my territory.” Expand my level of influence, expand my impact.

Now the expansion of territory is not so that God can boost your ego and make you shine but so that He through you can be seen.

Number 3;

Jabez prayed “Oh that your hand would be with me.”

Jabez understood that when God blesses him and then expands his territory the most important factor that would preserve him in his newfound place was the presence of God.

Beyond the blessing, beyond the expansion, beyond the great opportunities that God gives us, the most important thing we must ask for and hunger for is the presence of God.

No wonder Moses told God in **Exodus 33:15** when God was upset with the Israelites and wanted to give them an angel to lead them instead of God Himself.

Moses said **“If your presence does not go with us, please do not bring us from here.”**

He said **“For how shall we be different, your people and I from all the people who are in the face of the earth.” Exodus 33:16.**

God’s presence in your life will generate victory over the enemy; God’s presence will ensure that you stand different from all the rest.

“Oh Lord that your hand would be with me.”

This is also the place of total dependence on God where you understand that you are helpless without God.

Jabez understood that yes the blessing would flow in his life and yes his territories would be expanded BUT ultimately it would take the hand of God in his life.

He understood that it would take God’s hand for him to be sustained in the new place – he knew as long as the hand of God was on him; no devil in hell would defeat him.

“Oh Lord that your hand would be with me.”

When your strength is gone, when you have lost all ability to go on may the **HAND OF GOD PICK YOU UP.**

Paul said, **“Our sufficiency is from God, who has made us able ministers of the New Covenant.” 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.**

In the book of Acts the Bible declares in **Acts 11:21 “And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”**

It is by the hand of God that we see the Church in the book of Acts explode and achieve tremendous results - God was working through them like a puppet master, His hand accomplishing incredible and extraordinary results.

Ask Him today.

Number 4;

Jabez prayed “Oh that you would keep me from evil.”

Anytime you start moving to new horizons and your life transcends from the ordinary into the extra ordinary EXPECT OPPOSITION.

Like I always say “opposition is a sign of your strong position.”

Anytime you start making impact expect the enemy to throw stuff at you.

That is why you must pray this prayer “Lord please keep me from evil.”

The devil doesn't chase empty vessels – in fact you will never see people throwing stones at a tree that doesn't have fruits – so expect the enemy to fight you hard – the enemy of progress will throw everything at you.

But I love what the Bible says in **Exodus 1:12 “But the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew.”**

May God keep you from evil.

You see, when like Jabez you are blessed and then God expands your horizon and then places His hand on you so that whatever you do is successful – that

is the time to be most vigilant and careful lest the enemy strikes and pulls you down so that you are dishonored and ashamed.

May God keep you from the evil that afflicts our age – this present age that calls good evil and evil good, may God keep you from that evil.

May God keep you from the evil of pornography and adultery, may God keep you from the evil of jealousy and envy, may God keep you from the evil of wicked men who plot your down fall day and night, may God keep you from the evil of corrupt practices and manipulation, may God keep you from the evil of legalist religion that has a form of godliness but denies the power therein, may God keep you from the evil of murmuring and complaining like the children of Israel who murmured about God until they lost their inheritance in the promised land.

Jesus told His disciples when they pray they should pray **“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Matthew 6:13.**

Many times evil doesn't come looking demonic or Satanic, it comes wearing beautiful make-up and perfume, carrying an expensive brief case looking all so wonderful.

May God give you great discernment to know when evil knocks at your door.

There is nothing as tragic as to experience the blessings, the expansions of territory, the power of God and then collapse into sin and iniquity.

“Oh Lord keep me from evil.”

No wonder Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:27 “But I keep under my body and bring it under subjection lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast away.”**

And the scripture concludes.

So God granted him what he requested.

We serve God that hears and answers prayers.

Prayer is not an exercise of religious futility but an understanding that God hears and answers prayers.

Four things that we must pray for today;

Oh Lord that you would bless me indeed, that you would enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me and that you would keep me from evil that I may not cause pain.