

Mission Possible Jabez
House of Christ's Love Church
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1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Message

Today we are concluding our Mission Possible series and we're going to look at just 2 verses in 1 Chronicles 4 about a man named Jabez.

And it's here we find Jabez buried in a long list of genealogies — and it goes on for the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles. And it's likely that by the time you reach this short story about Jabez, that you are so bored you almost want to skip over him. But it's important for us to know that nowhere else does the author stop to mention about someone's story while listing the descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel. That let's us know that Jabez and his story was important to the author, and because Jabez was important to the author, he really should be important to us.

And the Bible doesn't give us a lot of information about Jabez or his story But it's significant that what Jabez is remembered for is not that he won a great battle or erected a magnificent building but that He simply prayed a prayer.

So let's read that prayer today and then we'll spend some time talking about how it impacts our life and church..

Read 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

⁹Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez,^[a] saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." ¹⁰Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request."

Even though we don't know much about Jabez, I think these verses clue us in on some significant characteristics of who he is and so if you're taking notes, let's spend a few minutes taking a look at 4 of these characteristics....

The first characteristic we notice is that

1. He didn't let his past or present determine his future.

- a. Verse 9 tells us that his mother named him Jabez, which means "he was born in pain." Names are significant in the Bible, and they have a variety of functions. For instance, a biblical name could record some aspects of a person's birth. Moses was given his name because his mother drew him out of a river (Exodus 2:10). His name literally means "to draw out." Biblical names sometimes expressed the parents' reaction to the birth of their child. Examples include Isaac (Genesis 21:6) which means "laughter", and Abimelech (Judges 8:31) which means "my father is

king.” Biblical names were sometimes used to secure the solidarity of family ties. Biblical names could be used to communicate God’s message. The prophet Isaiah named his first son Shear-jashub which means “a remnant shall return” ([Isaiah 7:3](#)). Biblical names were also used to establish affiliation with God. All the names ending with *-jah* or *-el* (and there are many of those) are saying “with the Lord” or “with God.” And so here with Jabez, he was given this name and it would be carried with him throughout his life and it was this negative stigma that would seem to never go away.

- b. Not only did Jabez have to live his life with the challenge of his name, but he also had to deal with his Challenging family. Now we don’t know this for sure, but if we can read between the lines a bit, I think we would realize that perhaps there was a situation throughout life with his Mother. First, what mother names their child a negative name? You don’t really find moms going through the baby book of names looking for names that mean “born loser”, or “never will amount to anything”! second, on top of choosing to name her son this name, can you imagine what took place every birthday for this kid? “Do you know what I went through and the amount of pain I had to endure to bring you into this world!!? Do you Jabez, do you?” And then third, he might have had to deal with his brothers as well....the text tells us that he was more honorable than his brothers and if they had a normal relationship, there was probably some jealousy, some teasing (perhaps bullying), and probably some practical jokes that went too far during this growing up years and those thing could have caused some difficulties in the sibling relationships.
- c. And then letter c here is that Jabez had suffered or was suffering from some sort of pain.... In verse 10 he tells God that he wants to be free from the pain. Another translation tells us that he doesn’t want to cause anymore pain. And so whether he has pain or if he’s causing pain, it’s troubling to him.
- d. But throughout all of these possibilities of challenges that he faced growing up and was presently facing, he didn’t let his past or present determine the direction of his future!! (He prayed, god, bless me!, Enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me!!!) these are all statements from someone who knows he has a better future and a greater destiny!!!
- e. And the same is true for you and I as well! We have a better future and a greater destiny that God has planned and that He wants us to enter into! And we can’t let our past hurts, habits, or hang-ups keep us from that destiny, NOR can we let our present situations keep us from all that God wants from us! Paul tells us in Phillippians 3 that we are to “Forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ and that we must press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus.!”

2. Here’s the 2nd characteristic of Jabez that we see in scripture - **He was more honorable than his brothers (vs. 9)**

- a. “Honor” means to be esteemed or approved
- b. “More” is used because it’s in a comparative relationship to his brothers – it wasn’t necessarily that his brothers were dishonorable, but it was just that Jabez was MORE honorable!
- c. He chose to live differently! His life represented a life where we find out in the next verse, that God chose to bless him and grant him ALL his requests!! And the same can be true for you and I as well....when we choose to live life differently, and choose to live life according to how God wants us to live, God will bless us!!

- d. I don't know if you've thought about it or have picked up on it, but there has been an underlying theme throughout most, if not all of the messages we've heard during our Mission: Possible Series. Does anyone have a guess as to what that theme might be? It's OBEDIENCE!! God wants us to live a life of obedience to him and it's in that commitment where we see God making the impossible, possible throughout scripture. And If we are committed to obedience, if we are committed to living life differently, not only will we see the impossible become possible, but we will also experience God's blessing in our lives!! I've shared about Dt. 28 a couple of times during this series and let me read parts of this chapter so that we might better understand the necessity of living differently and living a life of obedience to God.
 - e. **READ Deut. 28!! (Mark out what I'll be reading!)**
 - f. **Are we living a life that is markedly different from those around us and fully obedient to God? That's what makes us honorable in God's sight!**
3. The 3rd characteristic is this.....**He was willing to be bold in his requests (vs. 10a)**
- a. **In his request for God to "Bless him!"** he was praying for a specific gift from God, for a specific time, and a specific purpose, to bring increase into his life. It is God's nature to bless His people. He tells Abraham in Gen 12:2 "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing". In Gen 32:26 Jacob tells God that he "will not let Him go unless God blessed him!" Ps 72:17 tells us "His name shall endure forever; his name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Eph 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." At first glance we might think that Jabez is praying a very selfish prayer and that it's all about getting more and more and more!! But Jabez knew that God's blessing in his life wasn't just for his own personal benefit, but that it was also for the benefit to those around him. God's Blessing is spiritual prosperity that is to be shared!
 - b. **Enlarge My Territory!** When Jabez prayed this he was asking God to remove his limited sight of what God could do in his life!! He was saying God, "I am tired of limiting what you can do through me!!" And the truth is that when our territory remains small it's because WE have chosen to limit the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives!! God's choice is always to increase our territory and to increase our influence wherever we might go, but it's us who keeps God in a box and due to our limited sight, we limit God in what He wants to do in us and through us!! So if I posed a question to us today, it would be this....how are we limiting what God wants to do in us and in our church? Is it a lack of faith and trust? Is it a lack of vision? Is it disobedience and unfaithfulness? Or is it something else? What would happen if we stopped putting limitations on God to make the impossible, possible? What would happen if we just simply allowed God full reign and control in our lives and we fully surrendered everything to him and prayed this prayer? God, Enlarge my Territory!!!!
 - c. **Let your hand be with me** - Jabez was really asking God, "May I have your favor?" The word "favor" is one of those words in the Bible that we can easily overlook. We are more likely to use the word favor when we are asking someone to do us a "favor", or perhaps we would use the word when referencing a sports team that is favored to win a particular game. Now In scripture we find that Favor means: "to have The divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life. It is the spiritual condition of a person governed by the power of divine grace". And so when we come boldly before God to ask him for FAVOR, we are saying that not

only do we want his influence in our life, but that, in turn, we will reflect that influence to the world around us!!! and what happens so often is that we want God's blessing and we want his favor, but when we get it, carnal nature kicks in and we stop doing those things that got us his favor and his blessings in the first place! The Israelites are a perfect example of how that happened! And so we have to know that when we pray for God's hand to be upon us, that there will be a requirement from us!!!

- d. And then we see Jabez praying for 2 more things....
- e. **Keep me from harm & Remove the pain.** There are times in all of our lives when we must approach God boldly in prayer...just as Jabez has done here, and ask him to keep us from the harm and the pain that is caused from physical, emotional, relational, financial, and yes, at times spiritual situations that we've had to deal with!!! God cares for us and he will watch over us!!!!
- f. For the last few weeks I've had a song just keep popping up in my heart and mind and I've wondered if it would be fitting for any part of this series and I think it fits here perfectly for us. Listen to these lyrics:
 - i. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heav'n and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
 - ii. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
 - iii. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me. Refrain:
 - iv. I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

4. And then the 4th characteristic is that Jabez Lived under God's favor (vs. 10b)

- a. So we already talked about what God's favor is and the result here is that God granted him ALL he Requested!!
- b. Paul tells us in Phillipians 4:6 – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Jesus tells us in John 14:14 that we can ask of him anything that we want and he will do it!!!
- c. So What do you request from God, today? What is happening in your life where you need God to step in and make the impossible, possible!!!! Whatever it is, God will do that for us (in accordance with His will, not our will) and that's what this whole series has been about!! Turning those impossible situations into possibilities.
- d. My request of God is this...my impossible situation that I know he can make possible is that He would truly be The God of this city!!! That he would mend families and friendships, that he

would heal the broken and the hurting, that he would set the addict free, that he would supply for the needy, that He would breath new life into the dying, that he would renew and revive churches that are declining, and that he would save those who are lost!! That's my prayer and that's my song today!! Greater things are yet to come! Greater things will be done!!

Prayer