

Jabez called on the God of Israel (Quality good)

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[0 : 00] I venture to draw your prayerful attention to the first book of the Chronicles, chapter 4 and verse 10. The first book of the Chronicles, chapter 4 and verse 10. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coat, 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.

In large gardens there are trees, for example, maybe an oak tree. There may be some very little flowers. The snowdrop, for example. All in their appointed place. All with their beauty. All rooted. All dependent upon the blessings of heaven. In Zion. In the family of God.

There are those, perhaps we might say, especially in the word of God, that may be likened to the oak tree, or the cedars of Lebanon. There are others that in measure are perhaps more hidden. But nevertheless, they are numbered among the dear people of God. And so it is with this dear man, whose name was Jabez. We read so little about him. But what we read about the dear man, I do not know how it is with you.

But, and I'm not speaking this emotionally, or in any fleshly way, I feel I love the man. I feel I can walk with him. I feel in my humble measure, I can say amen. A prayerful amen.

To his prayer. This dear Jabez. And we read that he was honorable, more honorable than his brethren.

[3 : 27] He was a man that was a man that walked in the fear of God. He was a man that manifested his love to God in his daily life.

I was very struck with the reference, the crossroads in the Bible I have at home, to a psalm that outlined the description of one that is honorable.

And this way. And I turn to it, that it may be a help for our understanding of that word. A good man sheweth favor, and lendeth. He will guide his affairs with discretion.

And surely he shall not be moved forever. The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance. They leave a witness behind.

His heart is established. He shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies. He hath dispersed. He hath given to the poor. His righteousness endureth forever.

[4 : 42] His horn shall be exalted with honor. Here was a dear man. And as I thought of Jabez, I thought of Joseph, particularly in his younger days, with his brethren.

And how his brethren set a bad example, but Joseph was more honorable, we might say, than his brethren. And therefore, it's so easy to look at Jabez, so easy to look at Joseph, but what about ourselves?

Are we walking in the fear of the Lord? Is our life that which can testify of the grace of God and walking in the fear of the Lord?

We read the meaning of his name, Jabez. It signifies sorrow. His mother called his name Jabez because I bear him with sorrow.

Here is a man that bears a name of sorrow. Sorrow comes through sin. And we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

- [5 : 56] But we read that though this man, indeed as all, born into this world as a sinner, though this man bore such a name as he did of sorrow, yet he is a man that prayed.
- And we come directly to the words of our text. And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, he called on the God of Israel.
- And there my mind went to those words in the epistle to the Romans where Paul writes these words of sweet encouragement by the word power of the Spirit.
- For whosoever, that's a wonderful word, isn't that? However so vile, however so poor, however so sinful, however so unworthy, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Here's a picture of a burdened sinner. Here's a picture of a perishing sinner. Here's a picture of a lost sinner. Here's a picture of one fearing hell.
- [7 : 13] And exposed, as it were, as it indeed is to the justice of God, yet fleeing to the mighty God with a cry for mercy.
- As the dear man says, How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?
- And so, here is a word of sweet encouragement. Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. And there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.
- For the same Lord over all, and this is it, that's what I was looking for, is rich unto all that call upon him.
- And those that call upon him are those that feel their utter policy, their sinfulness, their unworthiness, their rigidity, and their calling upon him is a cry.
- [8 : 12] Lord, mercy! Lord, pardon! Lord, help me! Lord, save me! And so, this dear man, we read, he called upon the God of Israel.
- And also this, let us not lose sight of it, because it's a comfort that we can end this calling upon the God of Israel.
- Whilst indeed, as I've said, the prime concern is our soul, but also our providential concerns. We call upon the name of the Lord.
- And how often, when you've been beginning to sink, you haven't sunk utterly, have you? You haven't dropped into hell. Oh, friend, when you felt everything was going against you.
- Not a daily experience, but just here and there sometimes. Yet the Lord has appeared. When you didn't know what to do. When there seemed to be no way through.
- [9 : 15] When the mountain seemed to be, you could never climb over it. Who art thou, O thou great mountain, before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. God has done it.
- And I was thinking, on a providential line, of one or two in the word of God that called upon the name of the Lord. And I think of the great contrast.
- What about the prophets of Baal? They didn't call on the God of Israel. They called upon Baal. And they didn't fail in their calling.
- They shouted. They danced. They cut themselves with knives. Blood flowed. But silence, because there's no answer from the false God.
- Elijah prayed for the God of Israel. And how that fire came down from heaven. Oh, friend, I see how oft we can look back and do.
- [10 : 14] And the way in which we called. And that word called signifies urgency. Signified need. Signified fear. Signified helplessness.
- Signified that there was none but God could help. And we've come to him. And he's appeared for us. Maybe it could be.

And is sometimes. Perhaps no immediate deliverance. No immediate way through. But some secret support. Some sense that the Lord was going to bear you up.

And bring you through. May I, and I mustn't ramble. I do so often, I know. But I come just to Samson for a very brief moment. When he, you know, had slain all those Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

And threw the bone away. And then with this, he said he had slain this number. Whether he was boasting or whether acknowledging God's goodness, I must leave. That is not very clear.

[11 : 16] But we know that he came to an intense thirst. Intense weakness. That great strength that he had was gone. And if one Philistine had appeared, I'm sure he couldn't have done battle against him.

But in that thing is he called upon the Lord. How can there be help? How can there be water in this barren place? But God caused that water to spring up through that jawbone that had fallen on the ground.

And Hacor, the well of him that cried. And I just take another point. It may be, and I don't know whether it is to help. I have to leave that. We sow the seed.

Samson later miserably failed. He betrayed the secret. He was beguiled on Delilah's lap.

And they shaved off his hair. And the spirit of God was departed. But in the prison, how be it, his hair began to grow. And we read, on that memorable day, he called on the God of Israel.

[12 : 22] That renewed strength. That victory in death. That triumph, friend. So, here is a dear man. Whose name is sorrowful. Says a sinner.

And yet, he's got a God to go to. The God of Israel. And what a word this is. Jehovah. The God that had brought his people out.

The God that caused the waters to stand up as a wall as they went through the Red Sea. And all the history of God hearing and answering prayer and delivering his ancient people.

He called on the God of Israel. Saying, Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed. I think, I think, I've often said it.

You know, sometimes we can say, Oh, when our heart is filled with joy. When perhaps we're brought into some experience of real happiness, which we thank God for.

[13 : 22] If we are brought in to stand and see some magnificent scenery. Oh, it's a very deep expression of the heart, isn't it? It comes from right inside us.

Just as much as in grief and pain. Oh, just as much when we are overwhelmed.

Just as much when we are in the depths of trouble. And when burdened with sin. Oh, there's something within us.

It gets, it's not, this isn't surface work. This isn't just something that's nominal. This isn't just something that's repeating what other people say.

It's right from the heart. For example, I know I quote it often, but it comes again. The publican. It says, God be merciful to a sinner. It was right from the depths of his heart.

[14 : 24] And that's real, friend. Oh, that thou wouldest bless me. Indeed. Thou, me, indeed.

This word, indeed, signifies something special. Something real. Something spiritual. Something personal.

Something sealed right into his poor heart. Bless me. Though, look at my name. It speaks of sorrow. It speaks of sin.

But, Lord, I look to thee, thou art the God of all grace. Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. Now, we must not, and it's not right for me to pass over, and only thou should be brief on it, about the providential need that we pray for God's blessing.

And that is quite right. And that's why I read that portion in Deuteronomy. And God's promises to those who fear him, love him, and seek him, and put him first, and desire that grace, to walk in his ways, and keep his commandments, then that honor me, I will honor.

[15 : 45] We've proved it again, and yet again. And, oh, friend, was indeed, then we may say, well, how is it? Some may say, that with some, God's people, fearing the Lord, they are prospered, and others seem to struggle, and yet, they fear God.

God is a sovereign. God makes no mistake. And those that come into poverty, those that may come where there's only a handful of meal, and a little oil left, the last meal, prove God reigns, and are blessed with those particular blessings that those that are not in poverty do not experience in quite the like manner.

But those that are blessed with more of the riches of the world, they would desire to be thankful to God, and to pray to use that blessing for the honor and the glory of God.

I feel prosperity is a very solemn, heavy responsibility with a believer. What are we doing with it? Friend, may God give us the grace to use it right now.

I mustn't go on on those points, but that is a providential path. But you see, we've got something far greater than our body. We've got our soul. We've got our sin.

[17 : 14] We've got eternity. We've got that great day of judgment yet to come. Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. Lord, I do want to be brought, made right.

I was thinking of real conviction conviction of sin. You say, but that's not a blessing. It is a blessing. I didn't say it was comfort. I'll tell you, though, it's a pathway to blessing, and that's the beginning.

You see, it is as we're brought to know by the Spirit our malady, our sinfulness, our wretchedness, then Christ is made needful, Christ is made precious, the blood invaluable.

So, do not despise that conviction of sin. I think sometimes we're brought to a point, I know I am.

Is it just, well, because I've been told I'm a sinner, I've heard it all my life, I know I'm a sinner. Is it just that? Is it the work of the Spirit?

[18 : 28] Or is it just that I agree with it, I know it? Friend, if it's real conviction, as I've often said, it will lead you to call on the name of the Lord.

It will bring you to only the one that can pardon, and it will bring you there. So, I know that thou would bless me and bless me with pardon.

Lord, I feel that dear Jesus, oh, that I might know him, my Savior, my Jesus, my Redeemer, that precious blood, oh, that cleanses from all sin.

Wash me, Lord, make me whiter than snow, create in me a clean heart, oh God, renew a right spirit within me, say unto my soul, I am thy selfish, oh, my sin, my sin.

Oh, friend, oh, may God ever preserve us from having light thoughts of our sin. Light thoughts of our sin. May we be helped to seek his face.

[19 : 30] Cry for mercy, bless me indeed. Lord, these gospel blessings is for the poor, it's for the perishing, it's for the wretched, it's for the leper, it's for the vilest of the fire, and Lord, that's me.

Oh, let that mercy come, let those blessings come, Lord. Oh, do come, dear Jesus, do come, bless me, indeed, and oh, take away these filthy garments of mine, I thought they were so good, I thought that I could go to heaven, because I was a strict Baptist, because I, from a child, I've gone to chapel, because I never rebelled about doing that, but now, Lord, I see, while I thank thee for that privilege, but I see, that alone won't take me to heaven, I see what I thought would prepare me for heaven, and open the doors of heaven, I see all that is filthy rags, in thy sight, as far as compared with the blood of Christ, I need the blood, I need that blessed robe, and Lord, that has put that blessed robe on that poor thing, that said, I will arise, and go to my father, I tell him, I've sinned, I've come to nothing, I've spent all I've got, there's no one that's going to help me, oh, what a hard world it is, but oh, can the father still have mercy on me, will he still receive me, will he save me, nay, oh friend,

I must just, as it comes quite unexpectedly into my mind, and I've heard one or two instances of this, but here, I think of one, of one particular case, and that is this, where a lad went right away from his home, and I think he somehow got some contact, he did not go back to his home, he felt he couldn't, but he said, they sent a message, that if they were prepared to receive him, oh, would mother hang out a thing, a white thing, on her washing line, what would his mother do, I think from end to end, the whole line was with white clothes, and he went and saw it, and of course, there was mother, oh, and that is on the human level, what about our great God, our heavenly Father, and you've sinned, and you've departed, and that isn't only in the beginnings of your experience, I think myself, as a believer, I've been a prodigal, I've gone back into the world, but oh, I had to go back to my Father, and he's received me, and he's had mercy for me,

I know that the Father chastens, he corrects, but I must hasten on, that there was blessed me, indeed, oh Lord, these rich blessings, they're all spiritual blessings, what a word, what an ocean, what a fullness, you see, what a God, you see the Trinity, you see God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and you see everything stored up, you say, I'm a poor sinner, and so you are, and so am I, but here are the riches of his grace, here's unsearchable riches, here's the blood that cleanses it from all sin, all sin, here's everything that a poor sinner would need for, life and for death and for time and for eternity, oh, that thou wouldst bless me, indeed, all these indeed blessings, and enlarge my coast, and the thought here, I feel, leads us back just for the moment to the entrance of the Israelites into the promised land, and how that before they had possession of that land, they had to drive out, conquer the enemies.

They did that by the help of God, but they got so far, and you'll read later in the book of Joshua that they failed to do this, they failed to do that, the Canaanites, still dwelt in the land.

[23 : 26] Now, with God's dear children, we have in us the enemies, and we need the Lord, I feel to need it more than ever, I felt it a little bit as I tried to pray tonight.

Oh, these things that are in my life, and in my heart, and in, oh, in my mind, oh, these things that seem to gain the victory, take possession of me, Lord, I want thee to drive them out.

Before, I want the enlargement, but Lord, these things that seem to have got me, they seem to control me, they seem to get the upper hand upon me, there I want to pray, and I don't feel like praying, there I want to go to the word of God, and I don't feel like going to the word of God, and there I'm walking, and wicked thoughts come into my mind, I don't know whether to blame the Satan on that, or whether to blame myself, but I'm not going to blame anybody else, myself, I need thee, Lord, to appear, oh, may I, do I shock you with these things?

Friend, I know painfully these, what I'm talking about, and it's a grief, and sometimes I feel like almost biting my tongue in pain, as I think of what the thought that goes through my mind, of imaging, and almost challenging God, and mercifully is not always the case, but just flashes of it, as it were, and everybody will stop it, and drive out the enemy, this prayer, and look at this pride within here, and look about our darling sins, look about our idols, look about all that comes between our God and ourselves, Lord, and enlarge my curse, drive out, drive out these enemies, and as we read in the well-known words in Hebrews, let us therefore lay aside every weight, and the sin which thus so easily beset us, there are some easily sins, that are so loving to our fallen nature, that are dreadfully difficult to part with, may God grant us grace to do it, perhaps some of you don't suffer like

I do, and you may say, well surely pastor, yes but friend, you see, what we would never think of sin, or idols, we never thought of them in earlier days, but as we grow older, we see far more of these sins that do so easily beset us, Lord give us victory over and have us run with patience, the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, but what about this enlargement, oh Lord, enlarge my cows, and they've got me livery, say, draw out those enemies, reign in my heart, Lord, take full control of me, that's what I want, then enlarge my grace, you've been singing to beautiful hymns on grace, haven't you tonight, how you give it more grace, you've tasted a little of that grace, you long to taste for it, perhaps some of you may have to say, which grace that makes you long for it, so you have tasted it, but my friend,

[26 : 52] I say, we want more grace, grace to overcome, grace to gain the victory, grace to be more like our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, enlarge my curse, loosen my bonds, Lord, set me free, don't let Satan captivate me, don't let the world with its lawful, lawful pleasures, don't let them captivate me, there is a right enjoyment of these things, but Lord, don't let anything of this world, I could put it this way, for example, I like my bit of garden, and I don't think I have made an idol of it, but I've had to be careful, be careful, less pride comes into it, less I spent more time, say perhaps a Saturday in my younger days, have I spent more time in the garden than I ought to have done, you see, things come close, don't they, it's right that they do, but Lord, give me the victory, help me to do that which is right, enlarge my coves, and grant that increased knowledge of thyself, that deepness, that flowing of thy love into my poor heart, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of it, and love to fill my poor heart to Jesus

Christ, oh how weak it is, how poor it is, but Lord, thou knowest I long to love thee, I long to give myself to thee, yield myself to thee, Lord, do help me, do appear for me, I'm speaking much from my heart tonight, my friends, I didn't know how I was going to preach tonight, oh may the Lord bless the word, may pardon all that I've said amiss, but enlarge my toes, and that thy hand might be with me, oh can you bear the thought of going on your own, can you bear the thought of going through this wicked world, taking any decision providential, walking any way, in life, alone, without your God, oh my friend, what a wonderful word that is, we often name it, for I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help me, that thy hand might be with me, that thou will support me, that thou will strengthen me, that thou will help me, that thou will not cast down, lift me up, oh my dear,

Peter, beginning to sink, there he was lifted, and like that poor boy, that was, the Lord cast down, that dumb spirit, and they thought he was dead, and the Lord lifted them, like dear John, in the eye that his pack was, he laid his hand upon him, oh friend, that's it, the hand, is the nail pierced hand, and your names, dear believer, are graven upon his hand, oh they'll never be robbed out, you know, never, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, oh what a gracious God we have, and my friend, and if then I'm full of fears, then I doubt my God, oh I'm ashamed of myself, oh I am, be gone unbelief, we sung it on Sunday, be gone unbelief, thy savour is near, and for thy relief will surely appear, and so my friend, help us Lord to trust, and not be afraid, that thy hand might be with me, and that hand Lord, yes Lord, at times it needs to chasten me, help me to bear under it, that it may bring profit to my soul, that it may bring forth fruit to thy praise and to thy glory, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, oh friend,

I believe for the most part we are kept from the grosser outward evils of the world, but oh what about the evils within, I do hope I'm not distressing the young tonight, you may wonder what we're talking about in some aspects of it, one day as you grow up, and I hope to know the Lord, you'll know a little more of those things, so don't be discouraged, but I'm sure those that are young in the way, begin to know something of indwelling sin, and the power of it, now keep me from it, and you see, the nearer we live to the Lord, we shall say sin more vividly, what we never saw it before, we should think of that harsh word, we should think of that proud look, and much more, and enlarge on it, where you wouldn't have been trouble with it before, but now we see, keep me from evil, and it says here, and this is, and I must come to a close, that it may not grieve me, now here's a very vital question, friend, does that evil grieve you, does it, that's the point, it's a great mercy, if, when, we're conscious of our failings, that we're not let harden,

I've been reading in Exodus, about Pharaoh, whose heart the Lord hardened, that is, he didn't mean that God put a power to harden it, he just left Pharaoh to his own being, left to ourselves, indifferent, and concerned, well, I'm not bothered, I can't help it, I know I'm a sinner, there I am, friend, may it grieve us, and it will grieve you, and may too, if we have a sight, of the sufferings of Christ, and see what my sin caused that dear Saviour to bear in his body, not only on the cross, when I say not only including that tremendous load of sin, and all the sufferings of the death, but before that, oh, with love and grief, my heart dividing, with my tears his feet

[33 : 39] I'll bathe, and God granted him that which he requested, may the Lord help us to pray, to keep close, and you may feel like I do, oh, my poor prayers, still pray on, dear friend, try and look up, seek the Lord, pray for his help, pray for these blessings, and as I say, I feel, I, and I'm sure there are those here, can add a fervent amen to the prayer expressed in the words of our text tonight, oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed, amen.