

# Jabez

by David Ravenhill

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*David Ravenhill's sermon on Jabez emphasizes the importance of humility, prayer, and seeking God's blessing despite life's challenges and pain.*

**Duration:** 1:16:36

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 4:9

**Topics:** "Jabez", "Seeking God's Blessing", "Transformation"

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## Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the significance of Jabez's life, illustrating how he transformed from a man named 'pain' to one of honor through prayer and seeking God's blessings. Jabez's story serves as a reminder that despite our past and the labels placed upon us, we can call upon God for transformation and enlargement in our lives. Ravenhill encourages the congregation to recognize their worth in God's eyes and to seek His presence and blessings actively, as Jabez did, leading to a life of honor and fulfillment.

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## Transcript

There is a book that is published every number of years in America called America's Who's Who. And in that book, you have all the great men and women of renown that have accomplished certain, again, what is the word I'm looking for, a certain level of recognition in the sciences, in education, in this field, in that field, and all their names are listed in there. And the Bible is God's book of who's who.

And I'm not too concerned about whether my name ever appears, and I doubt if it ever will. In fact, I'm positive it never will, in America's Who's Who. But I am concerned, again, that my name is written in God's record.

And the thing that I enjoy so much about the word of God is the fact that it has so many stories of great women of God. Some of these stories are given in tremendous detail. We have men like Moses.

And from his birth all the way through to his death at 120 years of age, we have highlights about Moses' life. We see him in various situations. We know about his family.

We know about his wife. We know all sorts of circumstances about him, situations that we see him in, all these sort of little cameos, if you like. And then we have men like David, again, that's got numerous stories concerning him, numerous illustrations where we see David doing this and that and the other thing, and so on.

We have books that center around an individual's life. For instance, the book of Ruth, the book of Esther. We have men like Paul, again, you see him in his days prior to his conversion.

We see him being raised up of God. We see him establishing churches. And there are other times when the Spirit of God will take somebody's life and rather than give us all sorts of various incidents about that person's life, will summarize an entire lifetime in just two verses.

And it's one of those individuals that I want to look at in a minute. If you have your Bible, turn with me to 1 Chronicles chapter 4. And keep in mind, as we look at this, the Bible says that all these things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction. In other words, the Spirit of God in his infinite wisdom chose to select certain individuals to make up this record that we call the Word of God.

And there were thousands, tens of thousands of people that the Holy Spirit could have sort of highlighted. And yet he chose to put certain individuals in the Word of God. And this is one of those individuals.

He's never named before this. He's not named after this. This is the only time we have a record of his life.

And yet there's a reason that he is listed here. I have a friend by the name of Winky Prattney. Some of you may have read some of Winky's books.

Great youth evangelist. If you've ever heard Winky, there's nobody else like him. And Winky says the Bible is full of mistakes.

Winky is a brilliant mind. He came in number one in the nation of New Zealand in the sciences when he was in high school. And he says the Bible is full of mistakes.

And I don't know if you would agree with that or not, because you think it's a trick question, obviously. But I believe the Bible is full of mistakes. It begins with Eve's mistake.

And then Adam's. Noah's. Got drunk.

Uncovered himself. And so on and so forth. And the reason the Bible is full of mistakes is because the Bible also says that through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.

Can you imagine what the Word of God would be like if every single page did not have one single blemish in all the characters that are recorded there? In other words, nobody ever doubted. Nobody ever fell into sin. Nobody ever was in unbelief.

Every single individual recorded in the Word of God was absolutely blameless, absolutely spotless as far as their record was concerned. They were impeccable. Now imagine reading that day after day how encouraging that would be.

Obviously, the pastor could identify, but the rest of us would have a difficult time. And so the reason that God records these individuals sort of warts and all is because we can identify with them. And we can say, Lord, I can identify with that person's weakness because I've got the same weakness.

I can identify with that person's sin. I've been in that same situation. And the wonderful thing about God's Word, of course, is it is a redemptive Word.

And so we see not only the before picture, but we see the after picture. We see a man like David, this great, wonderful servant of God that gave us so much music and so many wonderful psalms and so on, and yet here the tragedy of his life. He was lifted up with pride at one stage, and God brought judgment.

Because of his pride, 70,000 people died. Because of his sin of passion, again, the life of that child died. And yet when we get to the New Testament, we find that the Bible says he was a man after God's own heart.

We see men like Jonah, who had a very clear mandate from God to go in a certain direction, to go to Nineveh, and he disobeyed. The Bible says the Word of the Lord came a second time to Jonah. Now, you see, that's encouraging for those of you who have had a specific word from God.

You've got into sin or rebellion or whatever, and as a result, you've failed God in some way. You can come. You can look at the Book of Jonah and say, Lord, let the Word of the Lord come a second time.

God's the God of the second chance, the third chance, the fourth chance. And so we read about these individuals, and we can identify with them. And there's some of you, no doubt, that have maybe a different way of looking at things.

You find it hard to relate to maybe principles. And so tonight, I want to look at this individual. His name is called Jabez.

He's recorded there in verse 9 and 10. And this is one of those before and after stories. How many of you love before and after stories? You know, you see these ads on television.

You've got this bald-headed guy. He's always got a frown on, not smiling. And then, of course, if you buy this particular product to go in for this particular hair restoration process, you can now look like the guy looks in the second picture.

Great big smile, bushy head of hair, and so on. Or you have the before picture of a man little 95-pound weakling. And because of working out on this particular set of weights and so on and so forth, he is now transformed into some sort of, you know, Charles Atlas.

Or you ladies, you see this lady who is a little bit overweight. And if she goes on this particular diet plan, she can look like this. And she goes down about eight or nine dress sizes.

And you have the before and after. This is a before and after. But God begins with the after.

And then he goes to the before. And so let me read, first of all, these two verses. Jabez was more honorable than his brothers.

And his mother named him Jabez, saying, because I bore him with pain. Now, Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, enlarge my border, that thy hand might be with me, that thou wouldest keep me from harm or evil, that it may not pain me. And God granted him what he requested.

The first thing we're told about Jabez is he was more honorable than his brothers. In other words, he was a man that was honored amongst his brethren. Now, whether his brethren means the community or whether it means his immediate family, it depends on the translation.

Mine says brothers. Others say brethren. But he was a man that stood head and shoulders above the rest of his family, if not the rest of the community.

By head and shoulders, I'm not speaking about his natural, again, height. I'm speaking about the fact that he was a man, spiritually, that was exalted and lifted up. He was a man that people admired, that people spoke about, a man that people emulated.

They wanted to be like him. Again, there was a certain dignity, a certain bearing spiritually. You see, this is not man's record of Jabez.

This is God's record of Jabez. Doesn't matter, really, what men say about you. It does matter what God says about you.

And when God says he was a man of honor, he was a man of honor. And I think the tragedy in the house of God is that we have too many ordinary Christians. Somehow, the heroes have gone, the Wesleys and the Finneys and the Whitfields, the Hudson Taylors and the David Livingstones and so on, and the Billy Grahams and so on.

And we're all very much alike. We tend to compare ourselves among ourselves, don't we? The Bible says if we compare ourselves among ourselves, we're not wise. We tend to look at another person and say, well, you know, I go to just as many meetings as they do.

And you know, I can do what they can do and so on. We sort of compare ourselves. And the Bible says that's dangerous.

I heard the story many years ago of a watchmaker who set up a little jeweler's store in a logging town. And he noticed after he opened his store that every single morning, a person would come by and look at the clock in his window and take out his old pocket watch and adjust it very carefully, put it back in his pocket and move on. This went on for a number of months.

And curiosity got the best of him. And one morning, he went out there and he stopped the man. He said, sir, I just wanted to talk to you for a moment.

He said, I've noticed ever since I opened my store that you've been coming by and you always stop. It hasn't been a day that you haven't stopped and you carefully adjust your watch and then proceed on. And he said, I'm just curious, what do you do? And he said, well, I'm actually a foreman down at the mill.

He said, most of the people, of course, are employed at the mill. And he said, it's my responsibility at lunchtime, 12 o'clock, to blow the whistle. And it's important, he said, that I have the right time because, he said, most of the people in this city or in this village set their clocks according to my whistle.

And the man sort of looked at him. He said, well, sir, that's interesting, he said, because ever since I've been in this town, I've been setting my clock according to your whistle. And we tend to do that, don't we? We compare ourselves among ourselves and we're not very wise.

We can all be off. But here is a man, again, a man of honor, a man that has been exalted. He's been lifted up.

He's, again, got the eye of God, the recognition of God. We have to ask ourselves this question. What was it about Jabez that caused him to be a man of honor? Did he have some sort of spiritual pedigree? Was he

linked to some king? Was he the son of a high priest or some other thing? According to the Word, we don't have any record of that.

And so we have to go into the Word of God again and begin to find out, why was he a man of honor? The Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs that humility comes before honor. Humility comes before honor. You see, God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

He exalts the lowly. And this, again, is God's estimation of this man. This is God saying what He feels about this man.

He is more honorable than all of His brothers. And so we know from the Word of God that he was a man of humility. We also know that he was a man that honored God, because in 1 Samuel, it says, he that honoreth me, I will honor.

In other words, if you want to be a man or a woman that stands, again, spiritually tall in the house of God, in the community, there are certain things that we need to do. We need to walk in humility. He has shown thee, O man, what is good.

What does the Lord not suggest to thee, but what does the Lord require of thee? To do justice, to love mercy, to walk humbly with thy God. We have a gentleman that's going to be ministering in Brownsville on Friday by the name of Francis Frangipane. Some of you have read his books.

And Francis Frangipane said, the greatest opposition that the church faces is not from the devil. It's from God. And then he goes on to explain that God resists the proud.

You see, we can become proud of our denomination. We can become proud of our success. We can become proud of all sorts of things.

We can look down our nose at the other church down the road on the other corner or whatever it is, and we begin to feel somehow a little more superior to everybody else. And as Francis says, at least you have a chance when you resist the devil. But you don't have any chance when you come against God.

And God resists the proud, but he gives grace. He empowers the humble. And if we want to be lifted up, the Bible says you've got to humble yourself, and he will exalt you.

And so here is a man, again, that honored God. He says, he that honoreth me, I will honor. Humility, again, comes before honor.

One chronicle says riches and honor come from the old. And so God had put his hand upon this man. God had raised this person up.

And I'm using him tonight for the simple reason that there is a message here, I believe, for all of us. Because there are some of you that are sitting there tonight, and you've already sort of written yourself off. You've already decided that you will never be anybody as far as the kingdom of God is concerned.

And I'm not suggesting that we're trying to be somebody in that sense, but you've just settled, again, for a sort of a mediocre spiritual life. And God is wanting to raise you up. You see, many times we come to God, and we present to God some facts.

And we hope that those facts somehow will, again, get us off the hook from being the man and woman of God that God wants us to be. For instance, let me explain that. There were 10 spies that went in to spy out the land.

When they got into the land, they found out that there were cities that were fortified up to heaven. They found out that the people of the land were like giants, at least some of them. And they decided that there's no way in which we can go in and possess the land, because the cities are fortified up to heaven.

We don't have the equipment. We don't have the means to destroy these cities. The people are huge.

We are like grasshoppers in their sight, and so on. And so they came back, and they presented to the nation of Israel a factual report. It was true.

What they said was true. And God said it was evil. You see, many times we come with the facts, thinking that the facts will be sufficient enough to sort of get off the hook.

You see, I came with the facts about my life many, many years ago, 35, 6 years ago now. And I said to God, here are the facts. I didn't do very well in school.

I am shy, introverted. I've never done anything publicly. I've never been able to speak in front of people.

All those things were true. All those things were facts. I don't have the capability.

I don't have the personality. And I presented to God, if you like, a bunch of facts. They were all true.

Hoping that somehow then I could just sit there and just be a normal sort of person that would pay my tithe and get married, settle down, and not sort of seek to do anything for God. And some of you are like that. If you haven't done it yourself, the enemies told you that because of your past, because of this thing or that thing or whatever, you'll never be able to do anything for God.

Really amount to anything in the kingdom of God. And so somehow there's no drive, there's no desire, there's no pursuit after God. There's no hunger for God.

That's for the pastor, that's for the youth worker, that's for the deacon, or that's for the elder, that's for other people. But I'm just an ordinary sort of a person. The thing I love about this story is it deals with ordinary people.

An ordinary person, very ordinary. And so this is the after picture. Here is a man again that is esteemed, lifted up, exalted.

People look to him, people want to emulate him, they want to copy him. There's something about his life that draws people. And to say, when I grow up, I want to be just like Jabez.

I want to have the anointing that Jabez has. I want to have the spiritual stature that Jabez has. Now let's look at the before picture.

The second thing was, he was a man afflicted from birth. The Bible says his mother named him Jabez, saying, because I bore him with pain. The name Jabez literally means a pain.

One reference says a shovel of mire, or dirt, manure. Can you imagine any mother calling a child a pain? Oh, I can see it in a moment of weakness, where you say, oh, get out of here, you pain, or something. But

I mean, literally naming that child from the womb a pain.

You see, names were very significant in the Old Testament, in the Bible. Today, names really don't mean much. It's, you know, we just go by, you know, the latest trend.

Now that Lady Di is gone, no doubt there'll be, you know, a zillion little Dianas that are going to be born. Sort of trendy. You know, some Hollywood star becomes famous, and he's got an unusual name.

And all of a sudden, you know, there's a whole influx of those names. We really don't think of the meaning. We just think of, you know, John, Mary, Susan.

But in the Bible, people were studied. And many times, prophetically, they were given a name. And that name represented who they were, their nature, their character.

And here is a mother that gives to her child the name pain. I can't imagine any mother doing that. We have a saying, don't we? Sticks and stones will break your bones.

Names will never hurt you. Been far more damage done by name-calling than ever there were by sticks and stones. And all I can imagine, as I sort of have meditated on this over the years and mused on it, is that there was something in this woman's life that went horribly wrong.

Let me suggest to you that maybe Jabez is the youngest. And she already has eight or nine or 10 or 12, 15 children, which were common in those days, large families. And let's suppose that she finds herself pregnant again.

And she's in maybe the early stages of pregnancy. And news reaches her one day that her husband, who is being out laboring, suddenly dropped dead. Maybe a freak accident, maybe some other thing that happened that took his life, got dragged by a horse or something.

And the news comes back. And here she is now, suddenly realizing, I've got to face the future alone. I've got all of these kids to feed.

I have no support, no emotional support, no financial support. What am I going to do? And here I am. I'm pregnant again.

I can't cope. Let's suppose that she has a difficult pregnancy. And at the end of that nine months again, she's had all the sorrow, the grieving to go through.

She's had this family to look after, trying to put together again all the shambles of a life. And the last thing she wants is another mouth to feed. And this baby is born.

And she takes out, if you like, all the venom, all the bitterness, all the anger, all the disappointment. And she names him, you are such a pain. And every time his name is called, he's reminded of his rejection.

His brothers call him, pain, time to come in. Pain, make your bed. Pain, we're going to school.

I mean, literally, this is true. See, our nicknames really are far closer to Old Testament names than the average name. We talk about Shorty.

That tells us a little more than just John, doesn't it? Tells us this guy's short. Einstein tells us that this guy's, you know, bright or whatever. And so we have nicknames.

And nicknames, in a way, are like Bible names. They describe the person, a certain attribute of that person. And so Jabez, again, is this individual, again, with a pain.

Everything is against him. He's known, again, from the moment he was born, this deep sense of rejection. And I share that because there are people, again, in this congregation that can identify with a lot of pain.

The pain of rejection. The pain of divorce. The pain of being compared with brothers and sisters that are a lot smarter, brighter than you.

The words that have been spoken over you for years. You'll never make it. You're a dummy.

You're stupid. All the things that are said. And somehow our life is molded, again, in the wrong way.

And we think, you know, I'll never make it. I'm not as good looking as my brother. I'm not as good looking as my sister, or whatever it may be.

And all the comparisons that we make, and, you know, the mental image that we have of ourselves that so often is one that, you know, I'm not very pretty. I'm not very intelligent. I'm not this, and I'm not that.

And then we get into sin. Then we have the stigma of some sin behind us, a prison record, drugs, whatever it is. And somehow society then brands us.

And we know it's sort of a double rejection. See, this is the sort of individual that Jabez is. This is what he was like before.

We begin to label ourselves. And again, we allow the enemy to label ourselves, don't we? One of my favorite verses is over in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 11, verse 32 on, it says, what more shall I say? For time would fail me if I were to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, Jephthah, of David, and Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Now, how many of you can identify with those people? Let me just read it again. Here were men that conquered kingdoms. How many kingdom conquerors here? Performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war.

They put entire foreign armies to flight. You see, somehow, we read the word of God so often. We see men, again, like David, like Barak, like Gideon, like Samuel, Jephthah.

We see these men, and in our minds, we put them on this pedestal, that I could never be like that. These are sort of special men. They're almost like a special breed.

They're so different than me. But you know, I left out the most important part there. If you were reading along, you'd have noticed it.

It says, right in the middle of all those verses, from weakness were made strong. Let me say that again. From weakness were made strong.

You see, every single one of these men that did all of these incredible exploits had one thing in common, weakness. Oh, we tend to think, you know, they were intelligent. They were PhD sort of individuals.

No, the fact is, every single one of them was weak. And if you studied their lives, you'll find that. Gideon, terrified of the Midianites hiding in the wine press, beating out the last few grains of wheat.

And the angel of the Lord comes to him and says, Gideon, you're a mighty man of valor. He says, not me. I'm from the smallest of all the tribes.

And if that isn't bad enough, he said, my father's house is the least of our tribe. So I'm not only from the smallest tribe, but I'm the least person in my father's house. See, from weakness.

God delights, in other words, in taking the foolish things of this world, the weak things of this world. You've got Barak. Barak was the Schwarzkopf of his day.

He was the military commander. And Barak refuses to go out to war unless there is a certain lady that will go with him. Her name was Deborah.

Now, thank God for the ladies, and thank God for all that they do, but the Bible says a man's glory is in his strength. There's not too many men that say, listen, I will not go out to fight unless a woman goes with me. We need the women for a lot of things, but when it comes to fighting, most men would not admit to that sort of weakness.

Honey, unless you go with me, I'm not going. Then you have Samson. Oh, what do you say now? Samson, that's a different story.

Here he is, you know, 7 foot 5, 350 pounds, rippling biceps. No. My father used to say, when we get to heaven, there's going to be a little 85 pound weakling running around.

Everybody's going to be lining up, getting his autograph. And you'll say, who on earth is that little guy? I'll say, that's Samson. Because you see, Delilah was mystified.

Delilah's question to him was, I don't get it. Where is the secret of your great strength? You see, if it had been 7 foot 6, and she was laying across, you know, two feet of bicep there, she wouldn't have asked the question, where's the secret of your great strength? And he says, listen, if you cut my hair, I will be what? Weak, like other men. He was a nobody, just a very weak, ordinary, average individual whose strength was derived, not from his muscle, but from his vow to be a Nazirite to God.

Jephthah, illegitimate. That's a bad beginning. Rejected, the Bible says, by all the elders of Gilead.

Rejected by his own family. A bastard. David, well, again, the Bible says that when the prophet Samuel came to town to anoint his successor to the king, that Jesse, David's father, called in the rest of the family.

There was a beautiful meal prepared, all the best china, everything else. After all, the prophet of God was here. And here is this ceremony that's going to take place.

He's going to anoint, again, one of the sons to be king. He starts with Eliab, tall, dark, handsome. And he's about ready to anoint him.

He thought to himself, this is the next king. God says, not that one. Goes to the next one, not that one either.

Not that one, not that one. All seven of them, God rejects. The prophet says, is this all? The father sort of says, well, this is the youngest.

And the word in Hebrew means the despised one, the least. Not just in age, but there was something about David that was seemingly an embarrassment to the family. How would you feel, say, if Billy Graham came to your house and everybody in the family was notified except for you, and yet you were right there, just a few houses away.

Brothers come in from out of state, and you're not even invited. You see, the least, some of the Orthodox Jews believe that David was illegitimate and sinned in my mother's conceit. And then you've got Samuel, just a little boy, didn't even know the voice of God from the voice of Eli.

You see, from weakness, we're made strong. See, that's why the Bible says, through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. And Jephthah is this sort of an individual, again, from weakness, was made strong.

You see, God is wanting us to reach a higher realm. He's wanting us to move on. He's wanting us to advance.

He's wanting us to be sick and tired of the sort of status quo of just sort of being the same year after year, no real change, no real transformation, no real moving in and pressing into God. So again, the second thing, he was afflicted from birth. The third thing, we've got nine, so we better hurry.

He was a man who faced a choice. Now, it doesn't say so, but if you muse on this and meditate on it, you come to that conclusion that somewhere there was a choice that Jabez faced. And his choice was this.

Or should I say his choices? One choice was to just allow circumstances to sort of dictate the way he was supposed to be, to sort of succumb to his name and his circumstances, to sit down sort of wallowing in self-pity and say, well, you know, I guess God never meant me to be anything. Otherwise, I wouldn't have this name. I wouldn't have a mother like this.

And I wouldn't, you know, all these things. If God had intended me to be some great individual, I'd have been born in a different family, a different state, better education, and all the excuses. And he could have very easily just sort of succumb to his name and allowed all the sorrow and the misery of the past just to sort of, you know, make him again a bitter, resentful individual.

Or he could forget those things which are behind. Paul says, forgetting those things which are behind, I move on, I press on. You see, Paul had to forget that he was responsible for the first martyr in the church.

He had to forget that he was responsible for killing people, making the church, the life of the church miserable, going into home groups, you know, doing all sorts of atrocities. He had to forget all of that. In fact, the Bible says that when Paul got saved, the churches throughout the whole region had what? Great peace.

I mean, he was a troublemaker. He was always stirring up trouble, always throwing people in prison. And can you imagine that sort of a past, having to overcome that? And yet he becomes a great apostle.

And so Jabez, again, he could either wallow in the past or he could go on. And there's some of you that need to make a decision. I'm tired of being the way I am.

I'm tired of all the circumstances and everything else that have just got me seemingly bound. I'm going to change. Somebody said the difference between condemnation and conviction is this, that condemnation is when the enemy comes to you, reaches into the past, and takes some incident from the past, brings it into the present to stifle any hope for the future.

You know, what about this? What about that situation that nobody else knows about? You know, when you were 15, when you were 12, you never told your parents or whatever. You never got caught, but it's caught you. Brings it into the present, keeps it constant in your mind so that you don't have any help of moving on.

Conviction, on the other hand, is when the Spirit of God reaches into the past and brings something to the present so that we can acknowledge it, confess it, deal with it, so we can move on. See, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. Doesn't matter how vile, how wicked it may be, God is wanting us to forget those things which are behind and press on.

And so Jabez faces a choice. I either sit here again with all this pain and suffering and rejection and everything else, or I do something about it. But having made up his mind, he was powerless to do anything about it.

There are certain things that we cannot change by ourselves. And so Jabez begins to pray. The fourth thing, he was a man of prayer.

Number three, he was a man who faced a choice. Number four, he was a man of prayer. And it says, now, Jabez called on God.

You see, prayer changes things. But prayer also changes people. Bible says, whatever things you desire when you pray, believing, you shall receive.

We have not what? Because we're not asking. In other words, all things are possible to him that believe it, that comes to God and say, God, I'm asking you. And God says, is there anything too hard for me? But notice Jabez's prayer.

It says, Jabez called not on God, but on the God of Israel. Why do you think it says the God of Israel? Let me suggest to you there's two reasons. Reason number one, at least a possibility, is that Jabez began one day to muse upon his own situation all the pain, all the rejection, all the suffering, all the hurt, all the damage that had been done.

The names, again, his name had been called a million times. And he began to think, God, is there any hope whatsoever? Is there any way that I can get out of this situation? And then he remembered his own people, that there was a time when his own people were in slavery. They went through incredible suffering, incredible rejection, incredible pain.

They were under taskmasters. They were beaten. Again, there was the oppression, there was the suffering, there was the affliction.

You look up those words, because God said to Moses, I've seen their suffering. I've seen their affliction. I've seen the oppression.

One seems to have to do with the mental realm. The other seems to have to do with the physical realm. Another seems to have to do with the spiritual realm, the oppression that was over the nation of Israel.

Again, because they were in servitude to the Egyptians who were into the arkel in a major way. Moses throws down his rod, they throw down their rod. Again, there was a heaviness, if you like, over that nation.

And here are all these slaves, again, beaten day after day after day, all the pain. And Jabez begins to realize that God brought about deliverance. He brought an entire nation out of bondage, out of captivity, out of rejection, out of their suffering, out of their pain, out of their misery.

And he says, God, if you can do that, you can do that for me. And he calls on the God of Israel. Or maybe that wasn't it at all.

Maybe the God of Israel was an individual, an individual by the name of Jacob. Jacob, who was always sort of living by the, you know, his own cunning and his own wisdom, always trying to get ahead, always got an angle on things, always stepping over people to get his way and so on. And Jabez begins to muse, and he goes back throughout the Word of God, and he thinks, you know, I'm sort of like Jacob.

You know, I've had to live by my own wits in order to survive, because of all the rejection and everything else. I've always got an angle on things. You know, I've learned I'm sort of streetwise.

And there came a time when Jacob wrestled with God. He had a divine encounter with God. And his life was transformed.

His life was changed. And God said, no longer will you be called Jacob. You're going to be called Israel, a prince with God.

And Jabez says, you know, God, I can identify with that. And I'm going to call on the God that changed Israel. And he calls on the God of Israel.

You see, you and I need to find somebody we can identify with in the Word of God. That's the reason the Word of God is written, that through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. All these things that are written a four time were written for our instruction.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God. It's profitable for reproof, for correction, and so on, for training. And there's somewhere, there is an individual in the Word of God that somehow fits into your life, if you like.

And you can say, you know, I'm like this person, I'm like that person, or these circumstances are the way my life has been. You see, God is a God that gives beauty for ashes. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

God is a God that is a redemptive God. He lifts the beggar, the Bible says, out of the dunghill, and he makes him a prince with God. Can you imagine lifting a beggar out of a dunghill, a pile of manure, filth, rottenness? He redeems our life, what? From destruction.

He heals us of all our diseases. So Jabez calls on the God of Israel. Again, a man of prayer.

Number five, he was a man who coveted God's blessing. Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. See, Jabez has discovered something about God, and that is that God's not angry with him.

God wants to bless him. God is a God of blessing. El Shaddai, or El Shaddai, the God of blessing, the God of abundance.

The word Shadd means a breast. Again, it deals with a sort of feminine side of God, the breasted one. The breast is where you're nourished.

The breast is where you feel secure. The breast is a place of safety and security, protection, warmth, acceptance. And he says, God, I'm calling on the God of blessing.

I need that security. I need that blessing. I need that nourishment.

I need to know that you love me, that I'm cherished, that I am somebody, that I've got value. See, some of you don't feel you've got value. Why? Because of all the rejection, words spoken, again, lack of education, whatever it is.

All of those stigmas that we have that somehow have made us into the individual that we are. And he begins to pray, God, I want you to bless me, not just bless me, oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. See, he's not ashamed to ask.

Remember, God spoke to Moses on one occasion. He says, Moses, I want you to assemble the nation of Israel, and I want you to bless them. Lord, bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face to shine upon them and be gracious unto them. Lord, lift up his countenance upon them. You see, that was God's idea.

God is a God of blessing. Jesus said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. What did he do? Picked up little children, bless them, bless them, bless them.

God is wanting to bless our lives. He's wanting to bring fruitfulness to our lives. He's wanting to bring increase to our lives.

And many times we sort of shy away. We've got a wrong concept of God. We don't really understand the nature of God, the Father heart of God, the love that he has towards us, the desires that he has towards us.

You see, he is the perfect father. So here he is wanting to bring, again, blessing. And then number six, he was a man who desired enlargement.

Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed and enlarge my border. Jabez was not satisfied with what he had. God, I want increase.

Remember the sons of the prophets who came to Elisha and they said, the place where we dwell is too small for us. We want you to come with us down again to another place here, was it Bethel? Where we can build a bigger place. And some of us need to have that sort of attitude.

Lord, the place where I dwell spiritually is too small. Lord, I need enlargement. My prayer life has never changed.

In fact, I don't have one. I've been saved now for two years, four years, six years, eight years, 20 years. I'm still praying five minutes a day.

I'm not praying at all. Lord, enlarge me, increase. Give me a greater capacity for the things of God.

The Bible says we're to enlarge again our dwelling, lengthen our cords, strengthen our stakes. The Bible says we're always to be enlarged. We go from faith to faith, victory to victory, increasing and abounding in the knowledge of God.

We're to grow up again in all things like unto Him. There should always be enlargement in our Christian life. We should never be in a place of stagnation.

We should be able to look back over the years of our life and see that we've made spiritual progress. Jabez says, Lord, I need enlargement. I'm tired, again, of being in this confined place.

I believe spiritually. Some of you, again, have got such a limited area, a limited area of understanding of the Word of God, a limited area, again, in the area of faith, limited prayer life. There's limitations and you've allowed those limitations to confine you, if you like.

It's time you began to break out. It's time you began to say, God, with your help, I can do this. I'm not talking about doing these things in the natural.

I'm talking about in the spiritual sense that we get a hold of God and we say, God, with you, all things are possible. You see, without faith, it's impossible to please God. We've got to begin to believe the Word of God and say, God, it is written.

I'm going to hold on to this until you bless me. I'm going to hold on to this promise until you enlarge me, till you give me revelation and insight. Lord, until I can begin to operate in this gifting or that gifting.

And again, the tragedy of the house of God is that we live in such a confined spiritual realm. And I'm challenged, again, as I read through the Word of God, all you've got to do is pick up and read the book of Acts and you think, God, the church today is not what the church was 2,000 years ago. These are they that turned the world upside down.

Healings and miracles, resurrections, Spirit of God falling, gifts of the Spirit operating. See, we've got to ask God for enlargement. Jabez understood, again, that God was the source of everything.

Lord, bless me, but enlarge my borders. Remember Caleb, one of the spies that came back and he said, listen, we're well able to go in and possess the land. He's 80 years of age, at least.

When he gets into the promised land, the first thing he says, give me that mountain. What's an 80-year-old man doing wanting to possess a mountain? Certainly, he should just retire, he's 80 years of age. We see there's something in this man, he's tasted something.

He brought back some of the fruit, he brought back some of the increase of the land, and he's never lost it over 40 years. And the moment he gets across the threshold, if you like, of the promised land, Lord, give me that mountain. His daughter comes along and she says, give me all the springs of the Negev, the Southland, I want all of that.

There was something in her spirit that was like her father's. And we need to have that sort of desire. Lord, I want increase.

I want my prayer life to go from five minutes or from nothing to 20 minutes or 30 minutes or an hour a day. I want my faith to increase. And then the next thing, number seven, he was a man who longed for God's presence.

He says, enlarge my border and that your hand might be with me. The hand of God speaks of the power of God, obviously, but it speaks of the presence of God. It's impossible for you to have somebody's hand with you without having the person.

Lord, I want your divine approval. I want your presence. I want an intimacy.

I want a relationship with you, God. Oh, I want blessing. I want increase.

All of those things are important. But Lord, I want to know that you're with me day by day, moment by moment. I want your companionship.

I want your friendship. I want to hear your voice saying, this is the way, walk ye in it. Lord, I want you to be with me, two walking together.

Lord, let your hand be with me, your hand resting upon me, the assurance of your presence day by day, an awareness, Lord, a consciousness, a God consciousness that I'm not alone. After all, the Bible says, I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you.

Lord, I want this divine friendship. Jesus said, no longer do I call you servants, slaves, but I call you friends. See, God's longing, again, is to be with us.

And Jabez understands all of this. Somehow there's revelation that's come to this man. He begins to pray and he begins to reach out and he begins to search after God.

Again, the path of the just is a shining light that shines more and more until the perfect day. And Jabez is moving on now. God's beginning to bless him.

God's beginning to increase him and enlarge him. Again, there's the sense of God's presence with him. Why? Because he's asked for it.

You see, we have not because we ask not. Some of you, again, you feel that God is a long way off. There's no awareness of his presence, no assurance of his presence.

Or sometimes when the music's at a certain level and so on, everybody's excited, we sort of get caught up in the atmosphere, but we're not really contributing to the atmosphere. I remember my brother saying, you know, you can go into a bar and it's filled with smoke and cursing and music and rock music and so on, and you step in and you step into the atmosphere, but he says, you're not contributing to the atmosphere. Some of us step into an atmosphere, but we're not really contributing to it.

And then when we leave, we leave it. Because we didn't bring that atmosphere. Others created it, if you like.

There was a measure of faith and so on and so forth. And some of you, again, are honest tonight. You say, you know, I don't really sense the presence of God in my life.

I have no assurance that he's with me. There's no real companionship or friendship. Number eight, he was a man who desired holiness.

And there's two ways of looking at this. Let me take that first of all. That your hand might be with me and that that would just keep me from evil, but it may not pain me.

You have the King James that uses the word that you would keep me from evil. Here's a man, again, that wants to be free from evil. The Bible says, when you pray, pray this way.

Lord, deliver us from evil or the evil one. See, he's known the power of evil in his own life. And he said, God, I want to be free from that.

I want to know what it is to walk in integrity and righteousness and holiness and purity. I remember back in 1966, my wife and I left New York City and took a freighter from New York City down the East Coast of America through the Panama Canal and down to New Zealand. Nine passengers on that freighter.

We arrived in New Zealand and then went out to a little island about 30 miles long, seven miles wide off of the coast of New Zealand called the Great Barrier Island. And we lived there for about 18 months. And it was a campsite, sort of a rehabilitation place for alcoholics and so on.

I knew the gentleman that ran it and we sort of based ourself there and I went out on some YWAM trips and so on. But the first Christmas that I was there, they had a conference. Lauren Cunningham from Youth for the Mission was there and Joy Dawson, some of you know Joy Dawson, John Dawson's mother, John was just a little boy running around in those days.

And there was a brother there, he's since gone to be with the Lord. Milton Smith, wonderful man of God, wonderful student of the word of God. And he gave an entire message on the fear of the Lord.

And I don't think I've ever heard a message before or since where the entire message spoke about the fear of the Lord. All the incredible benefits and so on. And at the end of that meeting, after people dispersed, went back to their tents and people came from different places in New Zealand, the camp, I remember gathering some of those leaders, Lauren Cunningham, Joy Dawson was there, this brother, Milton Smith, Neville Winger, again gone to be with the Lord, who ran this camp.

I asked them if I could talk to them for a minute and we went into a little tiny room that was just there on the grounds. At the most, it was eight feet long and maybe six feet wide, a little tiny office. And I said to those men and Joy, I said, I want you to pray for me tonight that the fear of God would come into my life.

I said, I'm not conscious of any particular sin, but I don't have a hatred for sin. See, some of us have got a tolerance for sin. There's an enticement.

The Bible says the fear of the Lord is to hate sin. A hatred, it's repulsive to you. Joseph hated sin.

How can I sin against God and do this thing when, again, Potiphar's wife, day after day after day, sort of tantalized him and seduced him. There he was, away from home, away from his family, could have very easily got by, nobody would have known, satisfied his own lust, and yet what? When the opportunity was there, he says, how can I sin against God? He was God conscious. The fear of God is a God

consciousness.

And I remember kneeling down, and those people put their hands on me and prayed, and over the years, there's been times, seasons, when it will come to me again, that situation. In a meeting, I'll just reach out and say, Lord, just restore the fear of God to my life. And I believe Jabez is saying, Lord, deliver me from evil.

Give me a hatred of evil. I know the pain. I know what it can do.

I want to walk in purity and holiness. You see, really, that's the key to enlargement, the key to blessing. The other way of looking at this, he was a man who desired wholeness.

That thou wouldest keep me from harm, my translation says that it may not pain me. In other words, here, he still had a tremendous amount of pain, bitterness, resentment. He had flashbacks, again, to the past, all the rejection.

He was a man, if you like, that was wounded. A lot of wounded people, a lot of hurt people. Hurt people, somebody say, hurt people hurt people.

Many times, we wonder why somebody's so cruel, so harsh, so bitter, so cutting with the words, and the fact is, they hurt themselves. And hurt people, again, hurt people. And he's being hurt, he's being wounded, he's being rejected, he's still got, again, all of this pain, it's all bottled up within him.

I think of a situation when my wife and I were in New Guinea. We had a young girl that came and joined our team. She did well for a number of months, and then we noticed that she began to be a little more reclusive and withdrawn, and we called her into the office, my co-worker and myself, and we sat down, I won't name her true name, but let's call her Susie, and we said, Susie, we've noticed that you just seem to be a little withdrawn, and seems to be a heaviness over your life, and so on.

Can't remember all the words right now. But she says, no, I'm fine. And we sort of prodded a little bit, and my co-worker, all of a sudden, he said, listen, he said, God's just told me something about you.

He said, God just told me you've been involved in an incestuous relationship with your father. And all of a sudden, she just burst into a thousand pieces. The tears just started to flow, she began to convulse and just shake, and she trembled again as the tears just flooded out of her.

It turned out that her father was an elder, a deacon in a Pentecostal church, one of the nations of Australasia. And from a very early age, she'd been sexually abused by him. And somehow, as a little girl, she thought, you know, if I tell my mother, it may separate the family, and I'll be the one to blame.

If I go and tell the pastor, he either won't believe me, or my father will lose his position, and again, I'll be the one to blame. And so she bottled it all up, year after year after year after year, all the pain, all the embarrassment, all the humiliation, all of that. And she found it hard then to sort of be around people, a lot of people that have pain, physical, sexual, verbal, whatever it is.

Again, there's been rejection, there's been hurt, there's been things that have gone on as a child, or you've maybe never shared anything with anybody else, husband doesn't even know it to this day, wife doesn't even know it to this day. Things that you've done, again, years in Vietnam, or whatever, again, a lifestyle, again, that you're not happy about, but still, it's marred your life, it's damaged your life. And he says, God,

you've got to deliver me from this, take away the pain.

See, Jesus said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to set captives free, to bind up people with broken hearts, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, a year of jubilee, not only to preach the gospel, thank God for the gospel, there's a lot of people with broken hearts, there's a lot of captives, captivated in the mind, again, with lust, with anger, with whatever it is. And J-Bez is saying, God, that thou wouldst keep me from all the harm that it doesn't pain me anymore. Take it out on me, just draw it out of me.

And the last thing, it says, and God granted him what he requested. Aren't you glad that little phrase is in there? See, if that little phrase wasn't there, we'd be left wondering, did God ever enlarge him? Did God ever put his hand on him? Did God ever bless him? Did God ever deliver him from pain? Did God ever increase his borders? I don't know, it doesn't say. Thank God it does.

You see, we've got a beautiful picture of J-Bez's life, but we've got also a very beautiful picture of the nature of God. All summarized in one little statement. God granted him what he requested.

It tells me a lot about God. It tells me this, that he knows you by name. He knows everything about you, your down sittings, your uprisings, your background, where you came from, where you're going.

He knows all about the pain. He knows all about the suffering. He knows all about the sins of the past.

It doesn't say, and God rejected him. God granted him what he requested. You see, there's a lot of things that God would love to grant, but we never ask.

But J-Bez did. God enlarged me, blessed me. Put your hand upon me.

Take the pain away. Deliver me from evil. And the end result is, here is a man that is a man of honor.

A man that people look to, and they can't believe, it's the same person. We used to call him J-Bez. I remember he was just always withdrawn.

He was always this, and look at him now. Lifted up in the midst, his brothers aren't even mentioned. His mother's not even mentioned.

His father's not even mentioned. He's the only one that's mentioned. And the Spirit of God puts him in the word of God.

Why? He's not related to anything. Again, he wasn't a priest. He wasn't a king.

He didn't do anything. He didn't bring deliverance to anybody. He didn't do any miracles and so on.

I mean, why does the Holy Spirit put him in there? I suggest the Holy Spirit puts him in there so you and I, through the encouragement of the word, might have hope. Let's close. See, I believe that God's here tonight.

I believe that same God that touched J-Bez is able to touch you. He's able to bring you out of your captivity, able to bring you out of your bondage, able to bring you out of your suffering. He's able to enlarge you.

He's able to bless you, able to increase you, able to put his presence into your life. All of those things. And he wants to do it.

He wants to do it. Father, we thank you again for your word. We thank you, Lord, for the richness of your word.

Lord, we thank you again for your very nature, Lord, your love towards us. Your desire, Lord, to restore, to heal, to free, to deliver, to bless. Father, we ask that you would come tonight, Lord.

You're the unchanging God. The same yesterday, today, and forever. The one that says, call unto me and I'll answer you.

Father, I pray tonight, Lord, as people call upon you, as they reach out in faith, Lord, that you would bring deliverance and freedom, bring change. Father, let this congregation and these congregations that are represented here, Lord, be men and women, Lord, that are honored amongst their brethren. The father refused to just stay, Lord, at the level that they're at.

But, Lord, reach out for more. Father, increase again your activity in each and every life tonight. Take away all the excuses, Lord.

Let's just stand, shall we, just quietly. I'm going to ask you to come. I'm gonna ask you not to look just to an individual tonight.

I'll pray, I'm happy to pray, and I know others are as well, but ultimately, we've gotta touch the throne of God. And some of you, like the woman with the issue of blood, you've gone to many physicians, many counselors. You've tried this and you've tried that and you've grown worse.

What you need to do tonight, you need to touch the hem of his garment. You need to come and find a place where you can sob your heart out if that's what it takes and cry out, but you need to verbalize to God, God, this is what I'm like. And I give this thing to you.

I ask you, Lord, to remove this thing from my life. Take out the pain, take out the rejection, take out the hurt. Lord, increase me, enlarge me, whatever it is that you want tonight.

The Bible says, call unto me and I will answer you. Why don't we just come and just avail ourselves? I believe God is here, wanting to meet needs tonight. Amen.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah, Lord. Father, as I look back, even in my own life, Lord, I just wasn't a normal man.

I was very abnormal, Lord. God, all bound up by drugs and alcohol, God. God, then one day, Lord, God, I called out to you.

Lord, you reached down and you touched me, God. Lord, you took the pain, Lord. You washed away the past, God.

You bound up my broken heart. You brought freedom to a man who was in captivity, who was in chains, sin. And God, I know, Lord, if you're able to do it for me, Lord, you're able tonight to touch every single need, to present yourself, Lord, as healer tonight to all those that are in need, God, a divine touch from you, Lord.

I know that the house is full of people that have been hurt in one way or another, possibly have allowed that hurt and that pain to become a stronghold in their lives. God wants to break strongholds tonight. The anointing of God is in this place tonight to destroy the yoke of bondage, of sin, of hurt, and of pain.

If you're in need tonight, please come. Please come. Don't allow pride to rob you.

Don't allow what the person to the right or to the left of you might think of you to rob you of being set free tonight. God wants to set you free. And as Moses and the team begins to sing, I'm just gonna ask the ushers to dim the lights down here at the front.

I'm gonna ask you to not swallow your pride, but spit it out tonight and respond to the Word of God. Hallelujah. Go ahead, Moses.

■ I just want to thank you, thank you ■ ■ I just want to thank you, thank you ■ ■ I just want to take a little time right now ■ ■ And thank you, Lord, for all you've done for me ■ ■ I just want to take a little time right now ■ for all you've done for me. Thank you, Lord. I just want to thank you.

I just want to thank you. Thank you, Lord. I just want to thank you.

I just want to thank you. I just want to take a little time right now and thank you, Lord. For all you've done for me.

I just want to I want to take a little time right now and thank you, Lord. Jesus, you're saving my soul. You cleansed me.

You made me whole. I just want to thank you for what you've done in my life. I want to thank you.

Oh. I just want to thank you, Lord. For all you've done for me.

I just want to take a little time right now for all you've done for me. Hallelujah. God is dealing with your heart tonight.

Just begin to renounce that pain. Renounce that pain. Renounce the sin or the past.

Come to Jesus tonight. Jesus tonight. The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is in this place tonight to bring freedom to the captive.

Tonight, if you're here and you want prayer, you'd like Brother Ravenhill to lay hands on you and pray for you tonight. You may also come to the front right now. Brother Dave will come around and lay hands on you and bless you.

I believe that there's an impartation that takes place when a man of God that's sent to us lays His hands upon you. The Spirit that was upon Moses was imparted unto 70 in an instant. The Spirit that's upon Brother Dave can gladly be imparted into my life.

If you want prayer tonight, come forward. Brother Dave will pray for you. Don't leave here.

If you drove half hour or an hour to get here, don't leave without receiving prayer tonight. Amen? Hallelujah. If you're at the altar and you continue to seek God, if you'd like prayer, just stand to your feet.

It's more important, I believe, that you get ahold of God tonight. Renounce those areas in your life. Gain that release that you've been waiting on.

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