

Jabez

by Douglas Crossman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and God's power in our lives, using the example of Jabez's prayer and background to illustrate the need for a heart that can cry out to God.

Duration: 39:02

Scripture: Genesis 17:5, 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, 1 Chronicles 9:1, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Timothy 4:18

Topics: "Blessing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of God's people being brought out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan. God made a covenant with them, promising to be with them and give them victory over their enemies. The speaker also shares examples of individuals in the Bible who cried out to God for help and deliverance, emphasizing the importance of seeking God's presence and power. The sermon concludes with the message that God delights in using ordinary people who are yielded to Him, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Transcript

Before I turn you to 1 Chronicles chapter 4, I trust you, if you have your Bibles, if you look through these chapters, they look rather frightening. You know, some of these names to you would look like some of the names of our Welsh villages. I don't know if you've got a village here like one that we've got not too far from my home.

It's called Llanfairpwllgwyngwychyngogauandysilioogogoch. And some of these names are a bit like this in these first nine chapters, the first eight chapters of 1 Chronicles. In these chapters that we have here, we find in those first eight chapters a list of 507 names, all in 407 verses.

By the time you come to chapter nine and verse one and you read, So were all Israel reckoned by their genealogies. You feel like saying reverently, that's just about it, Lord. I've been through every one of them and I didn't know one of them.

You're glad to come to the end of those chapters. Except, you know, that Paul says all Scripture was given by inspiration of God. Not all Scripture has the same revelatory value, but all Scripture is divinely breathed.

And if you were to drop reading the whole of Scripture, you'd miss some real gem. You see, of those 507 names, you usually read just three things concerning 506 of them. We read that they were born, we read

that they begot, we read that they were bereaved.

But there's one name. And it seems to me the Holy Spirit says, when he comes to this one name, I can't treat this man the way I've treated the other 506, just mention they were born, their children and their death. When you come to the character of Jabez, the Holy Spirit pauses and gives us biographical detail that's not found for anyone else.

Do you read in 1 Chronicles 4 and verse 9? Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. And his mother called his name Jabez, which is the Hebrew word sorrow. His mother called him sorrow, Jabez, saying, because I bear him with sorrow.

And Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my costs, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested. What a star in a dark firmament! And if we avoided the reading of those rather arid and sterile chapters of those first eight chapters, you'd have missed this gem.

You see, you come first of all to the person of Jabez. And concerning Jabez, the Holy Spirit gives us two things. Tells us first of all about his background.

Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. Now it seems to be agreed that that's the delicate way that the Holy Spirit says, Jabez's brethren were not very honorable. There's some tragedy here in the background.

You see the very fact that when his mother had Jabez, there's no mention of a father, that when she had him, she called his name Jabez Sorrow. I never wanted this child. It's given me sorrow that he's come into the world.

Fancy a Hebrew woman, for whom the male child was the epitome of joy, calling that baby Sorrow. Well, here in the States and in the United Kingdom, we don't invest names with particular significance, but the Hebrew mother did. For instance, when I was born in a place called Llanelli in South Wales, my mother called me Douglas.

Douglas. I never bothered to try to find out the meaning of that name, till I asked a young lady to get engaged to marry me, and she wanted to know a little more about me, and we didn't have a very good start when I proposed, because she went to the library, the local library, and she looked up the name Douglas, and discovered that it meant the Devil's River. She was finding me out straight away.

The Black River, the Devil's River. But what I want to say concerning this background and birth of Jabez is this, concerning this person, Jabez. When you read this, you see there's obviously some tragedy in the background.

Some disreputable family, not a very good background for a man of God, not very honourable, and there were the circumstances of his birth that caused tragedy, and dismay, whatever this background was. And yet, Jabez is lifted out as an extraordinary person. Now, there's a very fine library to my left here.

I haven't had time to look how many biographies are found in that library, but I wanted to tell you this from my reading, that one of the thrills of reading biographies, the lives of men and women that God has put his hand upon, as Jabez prayed that thy hand might be with me. As we look back into spiritual history, we find

there are men and women of God that had his hand upon them in an extraordinary degree. And what thrills my soul is that they were the most unlikely people.

I suspect that Jabez was illegitimate. That's only my own conclusion. I do know this, that in the past, so many of God's choicest servants have men who had everything against them.

Men like Alexander White and people like that, nor parents that he knew about very much illegitimate. People that were found as foundlings have gone on to be mighty men of God. Everything was against them.

You know, this isn't accidental. Do you know, God says there's something in my character that I delight to bypass the people that think I ought to use them. And I leave those people who've got everything in their favor, and I reach down and I take this common place.

Nobody else needs to want this place. I'll take this place. I'll own this place.

I'll conform this place to the image of the Lord Jesus. I'll baptize that place with the Holy Ghost. I'll clothe that place with my power, and I'll just show this world what I can do with an instrument that's yielded to me, irrespective of that background.

Now you read 1 Corinthians 1, 26 to 28. Listen here, says Paul to you Corinthians. If you've got a silver spoon in your mouth, beware, God might never use you.

I come from Bath. Is it Bath? Well, I come from Bath, as we call it in England, and that was the headquarters of Countess Selina of Huntington, the founder of the whole Countess of Huntington connection, the woman who took the famous George Whitefield under her wing and used him and prospered him. Sometimes when she would give her testimony to royalty and to the well-known people, she would say in her testimony, I thank God for the letter M. I thank God for the letter M. The people would look at her.

And in the Georgian city of Bath, the royal Georgian city of Bath, her audience were people of the nobility. And she would read her testimony, thanking God for the letter M, that Paul didn't say, not any mighty, not any noble, not any wise are called. He says, but not many noble, not many wise, but God takes the base things of the world and the things that are not to bring to pass the things that are.

Jabez, I bypass all these princes and all these people who have got everything in their favour, and I take you. You don't come from much of a background, but I take you, Jabez, from this dishonourable background. I know the circumstances in your birth.

You've got everything against you, but you'll be a man that I'll record in the annals of Scripture by the Holy Spirit as an honourable servant of myself, Jehovah, the person of Jabez, the prayer of Jabez, and Jabez called on the God of Israel. Is it saying that now and again, in common with everyone else, Jabez lifted up a prayer to God? Obviously, in the days of Jabez, amongst those twelve tribes, they've only just come out of Egypt. The history of Chronicles records their deliverance.

There are people here, we know all about their history, how God brought them out of Egypt. These are his contemporaries. They were religious men.

Hadn't they cried to God in their affliction in Egypt? And yet, says God, as I look down at Jabez, the whole bent of his life was that he was a man of prayer. You know God uses stout men. I didn't say a thing.

And thin men, intellectual men, non-educated men, all kinds and conditions of men, but never a prayerless man. Not in the outward deportment, not in the number of gifts that God, in his sovereignty, has given, in the makeup and constitution of that frame. But how much that man or that woman is a man of prayer will decide the ultimate usefulness of that man.

He was a man of prayer. In 1922, God mightily used a man by the name of W. P. Nicholson throughout Ireland in the last time of rebellion that they had there and really within two years that rebellion came to an end virtually through the ministry of W. P. Nicholson. The spiritual revival that came through his ministry subdued the terror of terrorism.

And you know he came across shortly after that he was being so much used to the Keswick Convention in England and God was using him. And after one of the meetings he was going for a walk away from the tent and walking behind him was the famous Bible teacher Dr. Graham Scroggie. And he was walking with another speaker, the well-known man who just went to be with the Lord Lindsay Glegg.

And Graham Scroggie said to Lindsay Glegg, you know, he says, Lindsay, that man's an enigma to me. He was a very crude man. He could use words that no other preacher would use.

Unfortunately some people like to imitate him. They have his crudity and they don't have his power. And here was this seemingly crude man and yet as he preached the Spirit would use him.

But seeing the way that God was using him Lindsay Glegg said to W. P. Nicholson at the end of that Keswick Convention you come down to London and minister in the fellowship that I pastor there and he went down. The first night nothing happened. The next morning Lindsay Glegg records he went into his room with a cup of tea, an early morning cup of tea and he stepped by some new bedding and there was a strain in the home.

It's ridiculous a man to tear up a bed in that way when he was being given hospitality in the home, this crude man. During the afternoon meeting he went to that afternoon meeting and he began to speak. And from the moment that he began to speak God began to work.

There was this pouring out of the Spirit upon the congregation. And afterwards W. P. Nicholson said to Lindsay Glegg he said I am sorry about the sheep. He said I couldn't face another night like I had last night.

And I spent the night and now he says I can tell you I spent the night in prayer. And sometimes when I begin to pray I don't realize the agony that comes upon me. And sometimes I take a piece of clothing and I took the sheets that night and I was pleading all night that God would hear and save souls.

I didn't know I did that to your sheets but I had to pray through to bless you. Lindsay Glegg says I could say it. Beyond the crudity, beyond the mere nothingness of the man there was this heart that could call upon God.

And I tell you this man Smith has got nothing for you. I tell you this man Schmul has got nothing for you. And this man Crossman has got even less for you.

Unless you are going to purpose in your heart you are going to be a man or a woman like Jabez who will call upon the God of Israel. You can't get it second hand friend. There is no baptism of power.

There is no baptism of purity. There is no usefulness in the hand of God unless you have been brought to that place that you can call upon the God of Israel. Jabez was a man of prayer and what was his petition in prayer? You heard it didn't you? Oh, that vow would it bless me indeed.

Do you know what this word oh really is? It is just the cry that rung from a man who is in desperation. It is not really a word. It is an ejaculation.

It is the cry that comes from the depths of the soul. Oh, that vow would it bless me. And you will get people that will come to the office.

People nearly have their times of prayer. They say I don't get through. They haven't been brought to the point of strangulation of word that they can only cry oh.

I find that Bible saints were burdened saints. You know Job is unaware of the conflict in the heavenlies. He doesn't know that God is willing for him to be exposed to satanic power.

All he knows is that he has lost his God consciousness. He says I go forward and I cannot find him. I go behind and he is not there.

I turn to the right and I turn to the left and he cannot be found. Oh, that I knew where I might find him. There is the oh that prayer for the realization of God.

Oh, we'd have revival in England. You'd have revival in the state if only there was this cry of the oh. Do you remember another time in Job? He sees himself because there was this oppression of the enemy.

He hasn't got this God consciousness. He doesn't feel that it was with him now as it once were. And he cried oh that it were with me now as in days past.

What a terrible prayer when that comes from a backslider. Job wasn't a backslider. He was simply unaware of the peculiar trials.

But oh that it were with me now as in times past. Oh says Jeremiah that my head were like waters that I could weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Oh that thou would rend the heavens said Isaiah that the mountains might flow down that thy presence that thou wouldest come down.

I think it was Charles Alexander the American evangelist came over to England and he was conducting a mission, an evangelistic mission in the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association Hall in Chester and nothing was happening. And he said what crushed his spirit most of all the people didn't seem to care and the committee that invited him just didn't care. He felt he was on his own.

And there was a man that had been worshipping, been working as a missionary in India, John Hyde, praying John Hyde as he was called. He was home and furloughed. And he felt the Holy Spirit say to him go to Chester and help my servant.

And he was a small insignificant little man like most of God's real saints. And he came up to Chester and as Charles Alexander as he came out of that another failure of a meeting he felt his heart would break. He said he was accosted by this little man who said sir may I pray with you, I've come to pray with you.

He said he was prepared to pray with anyone and they turned into a little room and he was so depressed they went on their knees he didn't know how to pray. He said but after some minutes he became aware of a tremendous conflict and then he began to wonder who is this man? He hadn't yet said a word. He said but now I became aware of tremendous spiritual conflict.

And so I just waited to see what had happened. And I became aware of the power that was emanating in this from this man. As he began in his own spirit and soul to call upon God.

And then the account goes that after this long period there just came this one cry. Oh! And do you know what happened said Charles Alexander that one word the spirit just fell upon Chester. That was his petition.

Oh! that thou wouldst bless me indeed. But he hasn't finished. He has his possessions in mind too.

And in large my borders or are it is literally from the margin my course. Here's a man that felt he was circumscribed. He says here I am Lord in this cramped place.

And the background seems to be this God has brought his people out of Egypt. He's bringing them into the land of Canaan. And as he takes them into the land of Canaan he says every foot of ground that their feet was tread he would give it to them.

All they had to do was go in and go in and take the territory. There would be enemies there. And God said you can do one of two things.

You can exterminate them if they won't leave or you can expel them but don't stay with them. Make no covenant with them. God made this covenant.

What an amazing covenant. How do you go and face those various enemies? I will be with you. I will be your power.

I have removed their defenses. Two of you shall put ten thousand of them to flight. The arrows will come thick and fast but not one arrow will come near you.

What a promise to an army. Go in, expel them or exterminate them and not one of you will be hurt. That was the promise.

Providing they were faithful to God. You know even before they went in there were some that wanted to stay the other side. And their prayer was this.

Take us not over into Canaan. Take us not over Jordan. A lot of Christians are praying that prayer.

And then those that went in, they went in and they camped. And forty years later, a man who was a contemporary of this man Jabez, you will come across him in verse fifteen, Caleb. Do you remember how at eighty years of age he came to Moses, to Joshua, their leader, and he points out to Joshua that there was his inheritance, Hebron, and he'd never possessed it.

He says, give me this mountain. He asked for his inheritance. And here's a man of the same spirit.

I want to be honest with you. As I turn over the pages of the New Testament, I've trusted God to fill me with the Holy Ghost and to give me a clean heart. But as I turn over these pages, I find there's much land

yet to be possessed.

And I want the Lord to enlarge my coast. Take me through to the fullness of the blessing that's in the Gospel. Even says Paul in Ephesians 3, 19, to all the fullness of God.

Do you think you've had it all? You know, sometimes, friends, I speak with brethren ministers, and as we share our varying convictions together, they sometimes say to me concerning the Holy Ghost, we have it all at conversion. We know that we didn't. I knew that I was saved and born again of the Holy Spirit, but being saved and born again of the Spirit, I needed to be filled with the Spirit, and God graciously filled me.

Oh, but I'm conscious of the land that's yet to be possessed. And as I've come amongst you, I've come not only to give, I want to receive. And I remember a great preacher in London speaking about the humility of the Apostle Paul, that when he was going to Rome and to those slaves that largely formed the Church of Rome, do you know what he said? When I come among you, I'm really going to give you something you know nothing about.

Oh, yes, he wanted to impart some spiritual gift from them, but that they might be built up with a mutual faith, both of you and of me. When I come among you, says Paul, yes, I come in the fullness of the blessing, but I want to receive from you too, that we might be built up together. Oh, much land to be possessed.

Enlarge my cause. If you come to this convention with the Jabez spirit, you'll have the Jabez blessing. If you've got it all, if you've had enough, you're in the wrong congregation.

His person and his prayer and his petition and his possessions, aren't he wanted power? He says, Lord, that thy hand might be with me. God had promised his power to the whole of Israel. If only they'd kept faithful, and they failed.

But here's a man that wanted that which God was willing to give. We call this an anthropomorphism. What did he mean he wanted the hand of God? Well, on a cold day, your car has failed to start.

Do you want to give it a push? Don't even you say, can you give me a hand? What do you mean? You expect him to chop it off and give you a hand? No, no. I want the power that you have. Mark, you can have the hand of God in varying ways.

Do you remember that psalm of penitence of David in Psalm 32? He says in verse four, he had the hand of God. And that was terrible. Do you know what he said? David, thy hand was heavy upon me.

I know, says David, I sinned with Bathsheba. And I did it. I didn't seem to realize the horror of it.

And as a punishment, your hand came down. And he was saying, David, I'm going to bend you. And I want to say tonight, if I grieve God, I want that hand to come and chasten me to it.

I don't want to be left to myself. You know, sometimes God has withdrawn and he's left the man. There have been the record that test me of those who once knew the hand of God and God didn't, at least they never went through with his chastening.

Oh, thy hand was heavy upon me. There's the hand of chastening. But this is the hand of power and deliverance.

Do you remember in Exodus chapter 13 and verse 2? It was Moses who said, thy hand, by the strength of thy hand, the Lord has brought us out. But he wanted the strength of the Lord's hand to take him in. Do you remember what they prayed for in that great prayer meeting in Acts 4, 20 to 30? Peter and John had been arrested for healing a man, commanded never to heal nor teach anymore.

In the name of the Lord Jesus, all evangelism was to come to an end. That was the edict of the Sanhedrin, the most powerful body to the Jews. That was the end of the church, if that had been obeyed.

And being let go, they went to their own company and reported all that had happened and the things that the chief priests and magistrates had said unto them. And when they heard that, oh well, we better not do any more for the Lord. When they heard that, they began to call upon the name of the Lord.

What did they pray? That by thy hand, signs and wonders might be done in the name of thy holy servant, Jesus. They wanted the hand of God. I want the hand of God.

And I hope you want the hand of God. I was down in the city of Plymouth in England some time ago. And there's a very elderly saint there that's a member of the League of Prayer.

And I called to see her. She was failing. And she had read the life of my father-in-law, G.O. Fraser, behind the ranges.

And she said to me, you know, Douglas, the most amazing thing in that book to me, I'm so blessed with that illustration of the boat. And then I suppose I must have looked a bit blank. I should have known the illustration, but it didn't come to mind.

She said, don't you remember what he said? I said, no. Well, he had prayed for 14 years for a work of God amongst the Lisu. He was the pioneer missionary to the Lisu in northwest China.

Nothing happened until God brought him to the place of the prayer of faith. And the Spirit came. And many thousands of those Lisu came to the Lord.

But this is what he said. For those early 14 years, without that plus of the Spirit, without that something of the Spirit, he said it was like trying to drag a boat over the sand. It just couldn't be done.

He said, but when the tide of the Spirit came in, you could rock the boat with a child's hand. The hand of God was there now. The hand of God.

We need power. We need power. And do you notice the wisdom of this spiritual man, Jabez? He knew that before he could have power, there had to be purity.

I can't understand why there should be this dichotomy and conflict as to whether the Holy Ghost is for power or purity. I don't want an or. I want the and.

I want power and purity. But I do know that God will not use the unclean vessel. I was booked to go into hospital for this month.

I cancelled the appointment. From time to time I have a throat operation. And I went into hospital some time ago, and for some reason the needle they had given me hadn't put me out.

I'm sure I wasn't dreaming. I can remember that theatre very well. And they were just waiting for me to just go off into sleep.

And I looked at these figures, all dressed in green. And there were the instruments. I didn't want to look at them.

And a man came up to me. I don't know if he was the surgeon. You could see I hadn't gone to sleep yet.

And he began to speak to me. He said, Do you know that all these clothes that we have here, all this clothing, after your operation, it will be put into the furnace. It's burned.

It's all made of paper, this. I thought that was interesting. And I still hadn't gone to sleep.

And he pointed to the instruments. He said, Do you see those instruments? I didn't want to look. He said, They're all for you.

And after you've had your operation, he said, they'll all be burned. They're all made of plastic, every one. And although I was a bit fuzzy, I knew exactly what he was saying.

Hygiene, cleanliness, an absolute must for my operation. A rusty old chisel, a rusty old knife. That would have been the end of me, dear friend.

The instruments had to be clean. And I want to leave you for a moment and I say to the Lord, Lord, I know I must be clean and I want to be clean until the end. I don't know what kind of spirit comes upon some people, but it isn't the Holy Spirit.

When you see the mess of their lives. Because he prayed that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. Well, I'm on easy ground here.

It's easy for me. It isn't always so. Holiness is at a discount in the United Kingdom.

Unrepeatedly, there are always those that want to tear you apart because you believe Jude 24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling. What, falling off a log? Do you know that I... Well, I won't give his name.

He's now a well-known professor here in the United States. He was my predecessor in the church and we were discussing sanctification. And he didn't like that I was preaching this to the church, that he'd been the pastor.

And I remember this, quoting this text, able to keep you from falling, from stumbling. And he literally, this great New Testament scholar, a professor now over here, in Fuller Seminary, said to me, Yeah, but it means to stop you from falling, from stumbling to the ground. Honestly.

Honestly. Huh? Scholarship! Science, falsely so called. When you have to twist scripture to be a sin pleader, there's something very wrong with your theology.

I was looking earlier, preparing for this meeting, that wonderful statement of Paul in 2 Timothy 4.18, The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work. There's his purity. And will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.

There's his preservation. To him be praise and glory forever. There's his praise.

And that, to me, is the New Testament parallel. The Lord will keep me, says Paul. The Lord will deliver me from every evil thing.

Jabez prays, Lord, keep me from evil. He says, Lord, it's such a pain to me. I don't want to be grieved again with another fall into sin.

He wanted to be holy. He wanted purity. He wanted to be preserved.

And was it provided. Do you know how this ends? God granted him that which he requested. And this is the Old Testament.

And it wasn't promised in the Old Testament. That was the New Covenant. This was the future day.

It was in that day that God would open a fountain for all sin and uncleanness. That my people shall seek for their sins and they shall not be found. But it's a man who says, Lord, make me pure.

Keep me from evil. God says, I'll do it, Jabez. And he did it.

God granted him that which he requested. Oh, there's the provision, friends. I'm so glad to be with you here tonight.

I'm so glad for the terms of the gospel. I'm so glad there's a full salvation. I'm so glad there's a power that's able to keep you from falling.

You can pray all that you bless me indeed. You may say, Lord, I know so and so, that doesn't seem very real. It can be real.

Don't worry about anyone else. Oh, that thou didst bless me indeed. And God granted him that which he requested.

Of course, it has to be by faith. Everything's given by faith. It has to be for the glory of God.

It has to be when you come in full surrender as well as faith. And God will do for us. God will do for us and above all that he did for Jabez.

When we come in that way. Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. And his mother called him sorrowed.

Jabez saying, I bear him with sorrow. Jabez called on the God of Israel. Saying, Lord, that thou wouldst bless me indeed.

And enlarge my cause. That thine hand might be with me. That thou wouldst keep me from evil.

And God granted him that which he requested. Hallelujah. May he do it for us.

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