

# The Prayer of Jabez

by Mary Peckham

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our need for God's blessing and seeking a supernatural experience through personal prayer and focus on individual needs.*

**Duration:** 55:18

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 4:9, Isaiah 64:1-4, Isaiah 64:6-8, John 3:16, Romans 3:23

**Topics:** "Jabez"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of teaching and learning the word of God. He emphasizes that simply acquiring knowledge is not enough; it must also be applied to the heart. The speaker uses the example of Jabez, who recognized his personal need for God's blessing and prayed earnestly for it. The speaker also shares his own experience of singing and witnessing the word of God in Scotland and England.

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## Transcript

only 19 years of age, and then out of the Bible College into the highlands and islands of Scotland to sing and witness in my own tongue, not English, but Gaelic. You like to hear it? Now you see if you can make out any words. I'll not tell you what I'm going to say, so you'll tell me what it is.

Ah, there's one he knows, he guessed. John chapter 3, verse 16. I should have quoted something else and then he would have been stumped.

So I spent about nine years in the highlands and islands of Scotland singing and witnessing the Word of God and visiting from door to door. It's amazing what happens when you get to know the people and the people come to trust you. Some of them who haven't been to church for many, many years.

Sometimes we had to tease them into coming along to the services. Other times they came because they were invited. Other times they came because they had some godly person in the family and they wanted to please them.

But above all they came because they were compelled by the Spirit of God to come. From the highlands and islands of Scotland I moved to the midlands of England, which was quite different, altogether different, and spent two years there going around the villages, because that's what the papal mission does, going around the rural areas of Great Britain. And so we did that.

And then I went further afield for about five years, traveled across Canada to South Africa, to Malawi, to Rhodesia as it then was, now Zimbabwe, and then continued a series of invitations, campaigns, camps, conventions, and so on. Three times I went to South Africa and the third time I got stuck, very nicely stuck though. I got married and came back to Britain, three children later.

And then we went back to South Africa. Colin is a South African. That's why we know Keith Daniel so well, who was here at the men's retreat.

And then we served the Lord in Africa for almost fifteen years. Then in 1982 Colin was invited to become the principal of the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh, and that's where we are now. Our Bible colleges are not as large as yours, because only those who are called into full-time service attend the Bible college.

So we have about fifty-two, and they range from Koreans to Canadians, we have one from Jamaica, we have Zimbabwe, South Africa, and so on. Burma, China, two from Romania at the moment. We've got fifty-two students in all.

And that is a full-time job for Colin. I think today being Wednesday, he will have lectured three times this morning, and then he'll be into the program of the college. And I know that his heart is very much with you at the ladies' meeting.

He's packed the program across to them today, and I know that they will be praying for us constantly through the days. Of course, they're five hours ahead of us, and I'm not expecting them to be awake during the night to pray for us at the evening session, but I know that they will be remembering us. Now we'll turn to the Word of God as we find it in Isaiah chapter 64, and I hope that you don't have any problem with my accent as we call it.

I'll promise not to read it to you in Gaelic. That's pretty much in the middle of the Bible. All that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.

As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence. When thou didst terrible things which we look not for, thou camest down. The mountains flowed down at thy presence.

For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither have I seen no God beside thee, but he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness. Those that remember thee in thy ways, behold thou art wroth, for we have sinned.

In those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.

For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou art our father, we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever.

Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolate. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is

burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

Wilt thou refrain thyself from these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace and afflict us, very sore? Amen. May God bless to us this reading from his word. Now we'll turn to Chronicles.

That's a bit further back. 1 Chronicles, and we will turn to chapter 4. And I'm not going to read to you all the names of these wonderful people that are listed here. I'm sure they wouldn't mind anyway if I pronounce them wrongly because they're all dead.

But I'll read what you can understand from verse 9. 1 Chronicles, chapter 4, and verse 9. You all found it? Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. You know them? Okay. Verse 9, And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bear him with sorrow.

And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, 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. Just these two verses.

Let us unite our hearts. Our Heavenly Father, we need thee as we bow in thy presence. We need thee to still our hearts.

We've been excited meeting with each other. We've been coming long journeys, and we come with an expectation in our hearts that we should meet with thee, that thy presence might permeate this building, that thou wilt make thy presence known to us. We know, Lord, that thou art here, but sometimes we are insensitive to thy presence.

But the preparation of the heart and the answer of the lips belongs to thee, and so we give our hearts to thee at this moment to prepare us. Thy Holy Spirit, to prepare our hearts, and to take the Word and to apply it to us. Speak, Lord, in the stillness while we wait on thee.

Hush our hearts to listen in expectancy. Speak, O blessed Master, in this quiet hour. Let us see thy face, Lord, and feel thy touch of power.

We ask it in that name that is above every name, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Verses 9 and 10 of 1 Chronicles chapter 4. It's worth reading all these fancy names right through to come to a verse like this.

There's nothing said about the rest of them in the chapter, but amazingly there is this brief record given of this man named Jabez. And what we read of him is this, that he was more honorable than his brethren. I don't know what his brethren were like.

Maybe they were not honorable, but that is beside the point. The record says that he was more honorable than his brethren, and then it tells us that his name was Jabez, and that his mother named him so, because she said she bore him with sorrow. And you ladies know that that is not the normal.

When a child is born there is great joy. I remember when our first one was born, and you should see the size of him now. He's now 26 and he's big.

But when he was born he was only five pounds two. He was just a little wrinkled scrap. And his dad went proudly up to the window of the nursery.

They weren't allowed to come in, and all the babies were in the nursery in a Johannesburg hospital. And he came with his card, Peckham, and all these other gentlemen in front of them. That's all they had to do.

Come and see what happened. And so they queued up, and then they went proudly to the window, you know, and everyone held out Van der Merwe and Van der Kolk and Van der whatever, their South African names. And all these plump little babies were brought, you know, and dad smiled and went on, you know.

And then they came with young Colin, and Colin said, oh my word. What a good saying, by the way, oh my word. He wasn't very joyful then, but he was very proud of him later on.

But normally the birth of a child brings great joy. I say normally, under normal circumstances, but somehow or other the circumstances weren't such when Jabez was born. I don't know whether she had a hard time.

She could have had. She could have had a long, long, long labor. I don't know.

But she bore him with sorrow. And so she called his name Jabez, and he had to carry that name right through his life. What a heritage poor Jabez had.

I wonder was he teased about his name. Maybe there was some other kind of sorrow that accompanied his birth. Maybe there was sickness.

Maybe there was death. We are not told. We are just told that she bore him with sorrow, and he carried that name with him right through his life.

But it didn't seem to affect him adversely because the Bible says that Jabez was more honorable than his brethren. And the thought that comes to me is this, concerning his name and concerning the circumstances, concerning his childhood. Sorrow is very often a good breeding ground in seeking God.

It is better to go to the house of sorrow, mourning, than to the house of joy. And I think we only realize that when we do come to the house of sorrow. I know in the islands where I come from, when I was telling someone today, when there is sorrow, when there is grief, when there is bereavement, everybody in the community comes to console those who have been bereaved.

They come from all over the place. Work stops in the village where the death has taken place, and the people come to sympathize, and never empty-handed. They always come bringing something with them.

If they don't bring great stuff, tea, sugar, all sorts, until the cupboards are buzzing in the house of the bereaved, and they bring money. They bring anything to help and console in a time of grief. And when I've gone to such a situation, to such a home, I've often felt nearer to God than if I went to a party, for instance.

Isn't that true? Flowers can grow on refugees, and very often goodness can come out of a sorrowful circumstance. Many have come to Christ through bereavement, through what God has done for them in these circumstances, through the awesome, awful finality of death. Well, Jabez, his name was Sorrow, but he was more honorable than his brethren.

And whether it was the sorrow of the past that lingered on, the cloud that carried over the home, or whatever it was, Jabez turned to God. And it says, Jabez called on the God of Israel. Well, many people call on the God of Israel, many people pray, but not so many can say, God grant it in that which you request.

Not every prayer can gain the ear of God. Many people in times of grief or times of danger will cry out and say, oh God, help me. Or something happens and they say, oh God.

But there is no answer from the heavens. Sometimes there is, but more often than not, there isn't, because their prayer is a sort of an emergency exit. It's just something that a rainy day experience, or a stormy day experience.

And when the circumstances change, then there's no word of prayer. But Jabez's prayer was not like that, and I want us to look, first of all, at his prayer, the sincerity of his prayer. It is preceded by an oh, and any prayer that is preceded by an oh is genuine and it is sincere.

Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. I like that prayer. It's a personal prayer.

It's not a general prayer. So often we come to God, don't we, and we bring our shopping list, our long shopping list to God. We bring it daily and we ask God to do this and to do that and do the other thing.

We rise from our knees and we hop in on our knees and then we go forth into the day's work with the consolation that we have done it again and we have said it again. That's all there is to it. Our prayer has not been preceded by an oh.

Oh, that sincerity, that depth. Oh, for depth in this day of shallowness in Christian experience. Depth.

Oh, that thou wouldst bless me indeed. You could take every single word of that and get something out of it. Oh, is a word of desperation.

You know, Jabez realized that he had a need of God's blessing. And how wonderful if every lady who came to this conference weekend had a personal awareness of this fact, that they have a need, and that they have a need that only God can meet. Not other people, but God alone.

I remember as a teenager, after a meeting during that revival, kneeling beside the late Duncan Campbell, who was the minister during the revival. Now, I didn't even know whether I was seeking or not, but as most teenagers I wanted God to do something real in my life if he did it at all. And I heard Duncan Campbell praying for me and I thought, well, that's wonderful that he should pray for me.

I can't put any confidence in the man's prayer or what he prays. And he quoted some verses of Scripture to me. And I thought, well, that's wonderful, that's nice of him.

But I don't want a text of Scripture from his lips. I want God to speak to me. Now, you might think I was a very stubborn case.

My mother always thought I was stubborn. But I wanted to be real. And I wanted something that you couldn't explain on a human basis.

There's so many testimonies and they speak about, well, I trusted God for this and I trusted God for that. But they don't wait for God to confirm it from heaven through his word. But the work has really been done in their lives.

And I was grateful for the prayer of the man of God. I wasn't ungrateful, but I wanted God himself to speak, because I knew that I had a need that only God could meet, and that the experience that I was seeking, that must be a supernatural experience, something that couldn't be explained on a human basis. You

know, the emphasis in Britain these days, in evangelical circles, and I'm sure it is here too, is on teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching, teaching.

And we know it all. We know how to deal with our children. We've got it all in theory.

We've got everything in theory, every circumstance of life, whatever happens, every stage of our Christian experience. It's all in book form, or it's all preached to us, and we learn it. There's a verse in the Bible that says, ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

In other words, it's all coming to us, to our heads, and nothing to our hearts. Don't you want something that will move your heart? Don't you want something that will touch you in the depth of your being? Jabez was conscious of a need. He was conscious of a personal need, bless me.

Have you come to a conference like that? Oh, God, bless me. Bless me as an individual. Oh, God, meet my need.

Jabez was desperate about it. Oh, God, bless me. Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me, bless me indeed.

The sincerity of his prayer, in that he recognized his need. I read to you, oh, that Thou wouldst render heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causes the water to boil, to make Thine inn known to Thine adversaries, that nations may tremble at Thy presence.

Oh, that Thou wouldst render heaven, oh, that Thou wouldst. And I'm sure that every pastor, every evangelical pastor would cry from the depths of his heart, oh, that I'd be there. Oh, that my congregation might come on a Sabbath morning and that they would come individually seeking the blessing of heaven upon themselves, not coming just to meet with one another, not coming just to socialize, not coming just to enjoy a good sermon, not just coming to take part in the activity, but coming with a personal need to a personal God.

Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed. You know, those who hunger, we heard this already this afternoon, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. David said, as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

O God, the great God, the terrible one, as he was described, my soul is thirsting for God, David said, for the living God. Oh, he cried, when shall I come and appear before God? God, my exceeding joy. And it is those who have seen him, and those who have caught a glimpse of him, that have the greatest thirst after God.

Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed. I want to bring it down to that in this opening meeting today, down to your individual land and to your individual need. Oh God, it's not the one behind me.

It's not the one in front of me. It's not the one beside me. It's me, Lord.

Oh God, bless me and bless me indeed. He recognized his own need. There was an agony in his soul.

There was a longing in his heart. There was earnest concentration upon this one thing. It was the psalmist who also said this, one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

As we study the Psalms, you know the Psalms out of the hymn book of our church at home in the islands, they only sing the Psalms. And one gets to know the Psalms from childhood. And there is this longing, there is this hungering, there is this thirsting again and again and again, as the heart panteth after the water brooks, with its tongue hanging out, panting and slipping the air, and longing for one thing, and that is the water brook.

So panteth my soul after thee, O God. O God, he cried, thou art my God. Early will my soul thirsteth for thee.

My heart longeth for thee in a dry and a thirsty land where there is no water. Can you imagine David out there under the sky, studded with stars all over, and he's there out with his heart beneath his feet. Inspiration is flowing and the longing is rising within his breast, longing, longing after God.

God, my exceeding joy, the sincerity of David's prayer, O that thou wouldst bless me. Can I bring it simply to your level this afternoon, O God, wouldn't you bless me at this conference? I'm glad to be here, and I'm glad of those who are here with me, but O God, bless me, bless me. We were singing earlier on, while on others they were calling, do not pass me by.

The sincerity of his prayer, now not this, the scope of his prayer, O that thou wouldst bless me indeed and enlarge my course. Now I know that that wasn't covetousness, otherwise it wouldn't have written that God granted him that which he requested. His desire was sincere.

He was tired of the limitations of his dwelling. He was tired of the smallness, kindly put it that way, of his area of activity, and he longed, he longed for largeness. It was at Partridge Wilkes he said that horizons should ever be a menace to our peace.

You know, the healthy sign of growth in a child is growth. And hunger, pity the child who's not hungry, and pity the Christian who's not hungry. Pity these poor people who have had some kind of experience of God a way back there years ago, and they keep parting back to that one experience of God, and there's nothing much happening today.

They think that was it, that was the grand finale, and now we're just coasting on to eternity. That's not Christianity. That's not godliness.

The scope of his prayer, enlarge my course, enlarge my course. Do you remember the Laodicean church? Do you remember what they said? I am rich and increased with goods and I've needed love. Oh, pity you, poor soul, if you've come to this conference and you have need of nothing spiritually, you've arrived.

Pity you, if that is all there is for you, all that you have. I'm glad I don't believe that. The Dave Murray MacLean of Scotland prayed this prayer, God, make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be.

A healthy person is always hungry and is always lonely and is never satisfied. I'm rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and God said, and thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel of thee to buy of me gold dried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich, and white raiment, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

You need to be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You need to be beset with the heavenly manner. You need to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

There is no finality in Christian experience. Thank God for that. No finality.

There's no such thing as I have arrived. Thank God for that. Okay, we've had great experiences in the past.

My temptation for years after the revival in the Hebrides of these glorious times of heaven upon earth, my temptation was to believe that it could never happen again. I've got over that. And I believe in a God who is great enough not only to do that again, but to do greater things at night.

He doesn't put a hunger and a thirst into your soul just to mock you. And so he cried and he said, O that thou wouldst bless me indeed and enlarge my coast. Enlarge my coast.

There is an awful danger of settling down, and there's an awful danger of going on all these days, just on all these days. Sometimes I've listened to testimonies, and they're the same every year. They're the same every time you hear them.

There is nothing new. There is always looking back. Yes, thank God we can look back to these moments of heaven in our soul.

But I'm looking for greater moments because we have a great God. So horizons should ever be amended to our peace. Enlarge my coast.

Lord, I feel constricted. I feel so limited. I feel so small.

Lord, I'm not content. I'm not happy with my present lot. If you are what you are, Lord, if the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.

I was speaking to students at the college the other day on one of the Psalms. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament show it as handiwork day unto day, yet are asleep night unto night. Toward wisdom there is no speech nor language, for their voice is not heard.

Their sound has gone out to the ends of the earth. And I began to think of God's creation, the greatness of it, and I quickly went to the bookcase in our home and I took out this volume on the world book and I turned to the stars and the heavens and the wonder of it all. And I discovered that a star, many stars, billions of stars, couldn't fit into the distance between us on planet earth and the sun, 93 million miles away.

They wouldn't fit into that. And there are billions of them and they don't know how many billions, trillions. And I thought, the heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament show it as handiwork.

The heaven of heavens, we read, cannot contain him, God, or how we limit him in our unbelief to our little sphere, to our little world. And how patient he is in putting up with us, with our limitations. Enlarge my coast, enlarge my coast.

Some of you may be so confined in your prayers that all you can think of is just your own little world of your own little family and your own relatives and so on. You have never reached beyond that. You've never seen the millions beyond that.

Tell you a story that I was telling Harold last night about one of our students. We have a number of pastors, Korean pastors at the college, there to learn English. They're all already degreed and what have

you, and they've got large congregations back in Korea.

And they're there to study the Bible and to learn English. And this particular pastor, Pastor Yang, who incidentally has written some commentaries, that's the caliber of the man, he's going out to Thailand to evangelize children. And if you've got your ears to the media, you know how needy the Thai children are.

And he's working at the moment with children in the Korean church in Edinburgh. He's got 23 children from the ages of five to 17, and he's working with these ones. And he spends two to three hours every Sunday afternoon with these children.

And he was telling the students the other day that he has a program for them. They learn of my heart, the Apostle's Creed. They learn the Ten Commandments of my heart, and they learn the Beatitudes of my heart, other portions of Scripture, Corinthians 13, I think.

And then they have times of prayer. He said, we came yesterday or whatever day Sunday was, we came to our time of prayer. So I got, first of all, a solo, a boy and a girl to pray, to share with each other.

Now remember, they're five to 17. It's quite a range. The little ones are quite little.

And to share with each other their personal needs, to confess their failings, the one to the other. And then these two would pray individually for each other. And he said we had a duet.

So we had two boys and we had two girls, and they did the same. And then he said we had an ensemble, and then we increased it until we had a whole choir. And they were all joined together, joining hands and praying.

And he said these Korean children wept as they prayed earnestly for one another and one another's needs. They poured out their hearts in confession of their own need and of their own sins, and they prayed for the children of Korea. And they prayed with tears, and then they turned to pray for the children of Scotland.

And they wept for the children of Scotland. And Pastor Young said, my vision for these boys and girls is this, that they will evangelize their own Korean friends, and then that they will evangelize those Scottish children whom they know, and then that the Scottish children in turn will evangelize the Scottish children. I thought what a vision.

What a vision. And these little children with tears were reaching out beyond their personal needs, beyond the need of their friends, to the need of their nation, and to the need of this strange nation in which they were now living. As their parents were studying in Edinburgh, O that thou wouldst enlarge my coast, O God, give me vision beyond the selfishness of my own little sphere, and enlarge my coast.

Enlarge my coast. I'm hungry for enlargement. I'm hungry and thirsty to go beyond the limitations that I now experience.

Our God is a great God, and we cannot limit Him. You think of what God can do in your own life if only you open your heart to Him, as Jabez said, and if only you prayed as Jabez prayed. The scope of his prayer.

And then he goes on to say, and that thine hand might be with me. You know, he's going deeper all the time. Thy hand might be with me.

If you've got himself as the center of his prayer. God, the center of his prayer. When we pray to God, how do we pray? You know, I find it I find it most effective and more of a blessing to my own heart if I concentrate on God and concentrate on His Word as I pray.

And pray scriptures. Pray the Word of God. Pray the things that God has promised.

Quote the words in which He has promised to bless you. And in the things He is able to do, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. The center of his prayer is God, and he's asking God that God's hand should be upon his life.

That thine hand might be with me. What a joy it is to see God's hand upon a child, upon a young person, upon an older life. It is obvious to all when God's hand is upon us.

Now, if God's hand is upon me, I take it for granted that in the first place, He will possess me. Oh God, that thine hand, the hand of God. That is a great petition.

That is a great thing that I must. Ezekiel in chapter 37 said, The hand of the Lord was upon me and he carried me. Where? Some years ago I was at a conference in Brussels, I think it was, with OM, Operation Mobilization.

And the young people there were waiting for the announcement as to where they were going to go for the summer. And I heard a girl beside me say, I don't mind where I go as long as it's nice and sunny, the climate is lovely. I thought, uh-uh, that's not where you're going.

If I know anything about God's hand being upon me, I know that He doesn't place me always where I want to be. The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and he set me down in the midst of a valley of dry bones. And he caused me to pass by them round about, and there were very many in the open valley, and although they were very dry, there were no hallelujahs from that lot.

What a missing field. And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? Lord God, thou knowest. I didn't bring myself here.

You brought me here, and you didn't bring me here to mock me. Lord God, thou knowest, the answer to that is with thee, Lord. I haven't got that answer.

Here is a prophet that has come from obscurity, and he is in the hand of God. Do you remember by the river Tabor, when he sat there with the people of God, the children of Israel? He sat there, and they were weeping, how can we sing the song of Zion in a strange land? And there was Ezekiel, I sat where they sat. And he wept with them.

But it says this concerning him, which it doesn't say concerning the others. It says, and I saw visions of God. Now these visions were very mysterious, and I wouldn't attempt to interpret them, but it strikes me that in the vision that Ezekiel saw of God, he saw a God of activity.

Whichever way the Spirit went, the wheels went, the Spirit went, and God in the heavenly was an active God. And that confirms what Jesus said, my Father worked with him that he and I worked. And so God is active in the heavenlies all the time.

He is active. He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Bible says. And so Ezekiel is carried by the Spirit of God, and he is set down in the midst of a valley that is full of bones.

But the point is this, the hand of the Lord was upon him, and the hand of the Lord possessed him, and he didn't resist the hand of the Lord. The hand of the Lord possessed him, and the hand of the Lord protected him. I'm certain of that.

And I'm certain that the hand of the Lord provided for him. And I'm certain that the hand of the Lord prevented him. And I'm certain that the hand of the Lord also at times disguised him and brought him through strange, strange experiences.

You read the prophecy of Ezekiel, you'll see the strange experiences through which God took Ezekiel and made him an object blessing for the children of Israel. And painfully too, that the hand of the Lord was upon him. Oh, I would like, wouldn't you like, that the hand of God was upon you? And wouldn't you like that those around you may be conscious, if they're conscious of nothing else, that they're conscious of the hand of the Lord being upon you? And this is what Jabez prayed, Oh, that thine hand might be with me, the hand of Almighty God, that he would be with me.

I don't care who else is with me. I don't care about anything else, but Lord, let thy hand be with me. And so, we find that God granted him that which he requested.

God's hand was placed upon his life. Are you totally and altogether available to God in your circumstances? Can you say that your dedication or consecration to God is so complete that you are in the Lord's hands and that he can do with you whatever he wants? And then he prayed and he said, and keep me from evil. So we may say that that is a stipulation of his prayer.

Keep me from evil. What did he mean? Oh yes, we know what it means to keep me from evil. Covetousness and these sins, these sins that we don't talk about, that are not obvious to others, all the external ones, okay, maybe we won't be blamed for these.

But out of the heart of man proceeded evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, lasciviousness, lust, and all these things. Keep me from evil. Now, isn't it strange that he links his prayer that precedes this with this request at the end? Because he has asked.

He has asked to be blessed indeed. He has asked for enlargement of course. He has asked that the hand of God might be upon him.

And God granted him all that. And now he asks that he will be kept from evil. Now, I was thinking of that just the other day, and thought suddenly struck me that hadn't struck me before, and it was this, that everything that Jabez asked of God could become a temptation to evil.

Do you ever thought of that? Oh God, bless me indeed. And if God blesses me indeed and makes me fruitful in the service of the kingdom, unless I look out, that can become a snare and I can become guilty of spiritual pride. Keep me from evil.

Bless me indeed, Lord. But oh God, I know myself. You must keep me when you bless me.

Oh God, when you bless me indeed, you must keep me there and keep me humble there. And when you enlarge my coast, let's take it that God prospers someone. I know a young man, and he was saved in a

season of revival, and he was a remarkable young man.

When he used to visit us, I always sensed that feeling of awe, because he was a unique young man in touch with God. And God revealed amazing things to him. He would know everything that was going to happen in the meeting that night, before ever we knew what we were going to do.

He knew how many people were going to come to Christ that night, and who they were. He could identify them, and when some would come, and they weren't genuine, he would say, Why did they come? I didn't see them. He knew that his mother was going to die three months before she died, and he went home every night to be with her.

He never told anyone what was sitting in his heart, but he knew. He saw himself on the day of the funeral. He saw himself going up the path.

He saw the man who came to tell him about his mother's death, because she died by the fireside, unexpectedly. He saw himself going to the very door where the black tie was that he was to put on. And when he would stand up to pray, I remember him praying once, he said, Oh, God, have mercy on the man in this meeting tonight who will never be in a gospel meeting again.

And there was a man in the meeting that night who was never in a gospel meeting again, because he died. And the hand of God was uniquely upon him. And then something happened in his life.

Oh, he prophesied. He said to himself, I don't know how it is, but everything I touch turns to gold. And what happened? It became a snare in his life, a deadly snare.

He's a tycoon of the island today, but alas, he has lost that touch from God. Oh, God, oh, God, keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me, that it may not grieve me, that I won't have to look back over my life and see how I was caught in the snare of the very blessing with which I was blessed and for which I sought. Now, I know I may be going a little bit deep, a little bit beyond some of you, but this is very real.

Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. Have you ever been under conviction of sin? Have you ever grieved over sin in your life? I liken it to the many journeys that we used to take in the Hebrides. They say that the mensch, that little sea between the mainland and the Outer Isles is one of the worst in the world.

And I've heard sailors saying that we have sailed the seven seas, and you can have a bad time. I remember one night I was down under in the ship, and I spent the whole night holding on to two taps over a wash-hand basin, and I was green. And I genuinely wished that that boat would go down to the bottom and never come up again.

I did, I really did. That can be terrible. When it does the corkscrew, you know, when it pitches and rolls and pitches and rolls, wow, it's like conviction of sin.

When I would get to the other side and stand on the pier, very uncertainly, and look back over that sea, I might be in an isolated island and I might look back and say, no, never again. That's it, finished, finished. But of course when the time came, I had to go again.

But when you've been through the storms of conviction, when you have known something of what sin really is, when you have seen yourself as one who lifts her fist in the face of Almighty God and in rebellion goes on in sin, and when your heart is crushed and broken and repented, you never want to sail these

seas again. You want to keep as far away from sin as you possibly can because it does grieve you. It does.

It really does. And I don't know whether Jabez found that out in his own experience or not, but Jabez prayed to the God of Israel. He prayed to the God of Israel, O, O that thou wouldst bless me deep, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.

How wonderful it becomes at the end of this conference, having prayed thus, and you're able to say, thank God, He has granted me.

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