



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

2018: Year of Breakthrough - 4

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The Prayer for Breakthrough

Introduction:

- For many of you, the past year has been one of the toughest years of your life.
- Someone has said there is really very little difference between people, but that little difference makes a great deal of difference.

All of us can be Significant Insignificant People.

All of who have never experienced a breakthrough, can truly experience a breakthrough this year.

- Tonight we are going to look at such a man. A very insignificant man just like you and me, who is given a special footnote in the Bible.
- Kind of the Bible's Little Big Man...we don't know much about him.
- A little man in a very little read book of the Bible: 1 Chronicles can be a real "yawner."
 - The 9 chapters are taken up as the official family tree for the nation of Israel, yes the whole nation!
 - 9 chapters of genealogy...covering thousands of years.
 - In these 9 chapters, over 500 names are covered!
- But in chapter 4, something interesting happens. After 44 names, a story breaks out that is significant to us today,

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

⁹ Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." ¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

- Something in the mind of the writer caused him to pick up the microphone and say, "Now wait a minute, this is important that you understand..."
- 4 simple, sincere prayer requests! What is so extraordinary about that? Look at the last sentence..."So God granted him what he requested."

The Prayer for Breakthrough

I. "Oh, that you would bless me indeed"

It might be important to look closer at Jabez:

- As far as we can tell, Jabez lived in the southern kingdom after the conquest of Canaan and during the time of the Judges, not noted as a time of great blessing or moral leadership.
- His story begins with his name, Jabez. Jabez means "pain." A literal translation could read, "He causes (or will cause) pain."
 - All babies enter the world with some pain, but something about Jabez's birth went beyond the usual-emotional pain. Did the father abandon the family at birth? Maybe the family couldn't afford another child?

- Jabez's name defined his future! The heaviest of burdens. In ancient times, your name defined your character to people.
- For example, Jacob means “grabber.” Naomi names two of her sons, Mahlon and Chilion (puny and piny.) How about that?
- But Jabez made a choice early on that the God of Israel was bigger than his ill fated beginnings!

Oh, that you would bless me indeed...

- I see a man weighted down with his past and raising his hands to God and crying, “Father, father, bless me, bless me, bless me indeed!”

What does it mean to have God bless you?

- To ask for God’s blessing in the biblical sense is to ask for “God’s supernatural favor.”
- We are not asking God for something we could get ourselves.
- We are asking for God’s wonderful unlimited resources to be poured out.
- For example, there is a story of Mr. Smith going to heaven (not Washington), God takes him to a enormous warehouse. God warns him that he really doesn’t want to see what is in the warehouse. Mr. Smith asks for the key, and God tells him he has the key, it is Matthew 7:7. The warehouse is full of shelf after shelf, floor to ceiling of blessings...

- The Key to the Warehouse: **Matthew 7:7**
"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
 NKJV
- God's nature is to bless you! Maybe you think your past shame has disqualified you, or maybe you think now that you are saved that God's blessing will just happen.

God's bounty is unlimited. Call out for it in your life!

- With a simple, believing prayer, God can change your future!

II. "Enlarge my territory"

Ask God to enlarge your influence for Him.

- Territory can be translated, "coast or borders."
- To Jabez this would have had the same meaning as "homestead" and "pioneer" for generations of American pioneers. In Jabez's time the conquest of Joshua and the partitioning of the Promised land would have been close at hand.
- Jabez is asking God to take everything he has and enlarge it, make it bigger!
- If Jabez was a businessman his prayer would be to enlarge his business!
- Jabez wants to live for significance! Not just security!

- If Jabez had been a mother, his prayer would have been, “Lord add to my family, favor my key relationships, multiply your glory through my children.”

God wants you to influence others.

- God wants to enlarge your OIKOS! Oikos meant “household in the OT, today it means “affinity relationships”
- God has given you key relationships at work, in your neighborhood, at the supermarket, you are the only Jesus these people know.
- God wants all of you to “be inviters and includers” of others.
- Ask God to enlarge your influence for him.
- Begin to see what God is doing just around you...to serve and show mercy and love.
- Our math: My abilities + My training + My personality = my assigned territory.
- God's math: My willingness and weakness + God's supernatural power = my expanding territory.
- “God give me your ministry for me, make it a miracle.”

III. **“Oh, that your hand would be upon me”**

If God starts to enlarge your territory, what now?

- God's presence must go with you.
- God's grace must undergird you.
- God's grace is his current power, present power!
- For example, If I look at my own power, I could be swallowed up. God has constantly placed me in the position of needing more...leaders, finances and wisdom.

i. This is my prayer: 1) Leaders; 2) Finances and 3) Wisdom

- But I can't do it! You can't do it.
- **Galatians 2:20**
I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- We must descend into God's greatness!
- If you will begin to pray for God to enlarge your territory, you will soon be out of control...
- Goes against common sense.
- Contradicts your previous life experience.
- Disregards your need for security.
- Sets you up to look like a loser or failure.

IV. **“That you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!”**

Keeping the legacy safe

- A full page magazine ad depicts a Roman gladiator in big trouble. Somehow he has dropped his sword, and the lion is rushing him with jaws open wide, the caption reads, “Sometimes you can afford to come in second. Sometimes you can’t.”
- After asking God for great blessings, influence and presence, he now asks God that he would not ruin it by doing something stupid.
- Remember that if you begin to pray this prayer, God is going to answer it...and you will begin to encroach on enemy territory!
- For example, I went to school with some of the most visible and most anointed Christian men. Most of them are not walking with God today, because of some moral failure
- Sometimes success can be our worst enemy because it dulls our sense of dependence on God and can make us prone to presumption.

Stay away from temptation you can’t handle

- The enemy is always ready to flank you. He knows your weaknesses.
- Jesus said, “And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil.”

- Ask God to keep you away from temptation!! Stay away from it daily.

Conclusion:

- Welcome to God's honor roll..."Jabez was more honorable than his brothers."
- Why? Because God loves to answer such prayers.
- Why? Because God loves to take someone with ordinary talents and use them to do extraordinary things.
- Why? Because God loves to do the supernatural through the natural.
- Why? Because God just needs people who will pray and believe!
- **Begin to pray this prayer everyday and watch God move!**