

# The Prayer of Jabez

1 Chr 4:9-10

## Introduction:

1. What a pain! Did you ever know anyone like that?
  - a. It was said about the man we are studying today
  - b. His name in Hebrew means “pain” His mother delivered him in pain and his mother never let him forget it
  - c. She named him “pain” so that he would always remember what he had done to his poor mother.
  - d. All babies arrive with a certain amount of pain, but something about Jabez’ birth went beyond the usual; so much that his mother chose to be forever reminded of his birth by giving her son the name “pain.”
  - e. In spite of this, the Bible says that he was an honorable man – more honorable than the rest of his family
2. We find Jabez mentioned in a long list of genealogies
  - a. So and so begat so and so goes on for nine chapters
  - b. 425 people are mentioned without comment until we get to Jabez and God stops to point him out to us
  - c. During this exhaustive list of genealogies, God stops to point out a man named Jabez and his prayer.
  - d. He is there like a shining star in this long list of anonymous characters
3. Jabez is not remembered for some outstanding achievement
  - a. He did not win a great battle
  - b. He was not a mighty leader
  - c. He wasn’t a priest or a Levite
  - d. He wasn’t the son of someone important
  - e. He is remembered because he prayed a prayer – the only recorded words of his life are here in this prayer
4. God called Jabez more honorable than his brothers. Why? – Because he was a man of prayer
5. The summer I was ten the peach tree in grandma’s backyard yielded a bumper crop. She said it was time for me to learn to can. I watched in awe as her experienced hands pared the peaches, quickly revealing the sweet meat. It wasn’t long before the juice was dripping off her arms. I started peeling, carefully following my grandmother’s example, when I noticed that her eyes were closed. I knew that she was praying. Quietly I asked, “Grandma, why do you pray so much? You’re already so good.” She put down her paring knife and cupped her hands around my face. “I talk with the Lord all the time,” she said, “so that when I really need Him He will know my voice.” - Doris Huffman
5. Let’s look at this prayer of Jabez

## **I. Bless Me – vs 10 ←**

### **A. Jabez Was Not Being Selfish**

1. He wanted God's best and believed that God wanted to give it to him
2. Perhaps he remembered God's promise to Abraham – Gen 12:2  
*2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing;*
3. Jabez sought the blessing of God so he could be a blessing to others
  - a) *There is no hint that this was a prayer for financial blessing*
  - b) *Jabez wanted God to bless his efforts*
  - c) *They had been in the promised land since the days of Joshua but had been unable to drive out the inhabitants*
  - d) *He was sensitive to his own insufficiency and knew that if God did not bless his efforts then he would be as unsuccessful as his predecessors*
4. Maybe Jabez remembered hearing about Jacob – Gen 32:26  
*26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*
5. Had Jabez heard about Joseph and the way that God blessed him?

### **B. We Need the Blessing of God as Individual Believers**

1. It is not wrong to pray for God to bless you if it is for the purpose of being a blessing
2. If you want more wisdom so you can feel smarter than others – your prayer for wisdom probably won't be answered
3. If you want success or want to be a leader so that you can lord it over others, your prayer probably will not be answered
4. We need to wrestle with God and not let go until He blesses us
5. It is not wrong to want what God promised  
*Ps 5:12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*
6. His prayer for blessing was legitimate and one we need to pray today

### **C. I Pray That God Will Bless This Church**

1. God has blessed this church with faithful church leaders
2. God has blessed this church with faithful members and workers
3. I pray that God will bless this church even more
4. Apathy has gripped many believers that we don't seek God's blessing
  - a) *We have so much already.*
  - b) *Our plates are so full.*
5. Blessing means responsibility.
  - a) *Serving God by serving people takes time.*
  - b) *If God gives me more, I have to do more, and I just want to relax.*
6. The surest sign that you are a growing Christian is that there is within you a growing desire to have your life used by God.

## **II. Enlarge Me – vs 10**

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh 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.

### **A. Jabez Was Not Being Selfish Here**

1. He was not a land grabber or a prosperity hunter
  - a) *He was praying in the center of God's will*
  - b) *Ex 34:24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.*
  - c) *De 12:20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.*
  - d) *He was not content with the status quo*
2. Jabez was from the tribe of Judah
  - a) *This tribe had not conquered all the land that the Lord had given them*
  - b) *If the Lord would enlarge the borders then he would have more people to lead and serve*

### **B. Let's Pray That God Will Enlarge us Individually**

1. Jabez wanted to be used by God more than anything else – is that your desire?
2. Have you prayed for God to enlarge your sphere of influence?
3. Enlarge our faith
4. Enlarge our service
5. Enlarge our love for each other

### **C. I Pray That God Will Enlarge the Borders of HBC**

1. Oh that God would enlarge the vision of this church
2. That God would enlarge the outreach of this church
3. That God would enlarge the mission program of this church
4. Many churches have turned into a club with a steeple
5. We need to be used by Him in a world that desperately needs him

### **III. Accompany Me – vs 10**

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh 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.

#### **A. The Hand of God Symbolizes Strength / Power**

1. Ezekiel began his vision of the valley of dry bones by exclaiming, “The hand of God came upon me”
2. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem to begin rebuilding the walls, he recounted to the people how he stood before the king
  - a) *How could he explain how the king allowed a Jewish cup bearer to return to rebuild the walls?*
  - b) *Ne 2:8b ... And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.*
3. To have God’s hand on your life is to have God’s power
  - a) *Jabez knew that what he was praying for was bigger than what he could accomplish himself*
  - b) *He would need the hand of God on his life to accomplish all he wanted for the Lord*

#### **B. We Need God’s Hand on Us Individually**

1. Parents need the hand of God on them
2. Imagine if all SS teachers had the hand of God upon them
3. Imagine if all deacons had the hand of God upon them
4. Imagine if every member of this church had the hand of God
5. Imagine if we had the hand of God on us when we were visiting

#### **C. Our Church Needs the Hand of God on It**

1. The hand of God needs to be on the pastor’s leadership
2. The hand of God needs to be on the pastor’s preaching
3. The hand of God needs to be on every worker
4. The hand of God needs to be on every ministry

#### **IV. Keep Me – vs 10**

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

##### **A. This Petition Reveals Jabez' Character**

1. This is actually a play on words – “Keep me away from evil, that I might not cause pain”
2. He had caused pain, but he did not want to cause pain any more
3. Jabez wanted to be protected from the harm of evil, but he also wanted to be spared from the pain of sin
4. Sin causes pain to the sinner - Adam and Eve – Cain - David
5. Sin causes pain to the ones sinned against
  - a) *Think of the pain in this world because of sin*
  - b) *Think of the family pain resulting from sin*
6. Sin causes pain to the Lord – Gen 6:5-6 ←
7. We do not need to wait until we are in trouble to call on God – we need preventive prayer

##### **B. We Would Do Well To Desire This Individually**

1. We need a healthy fear of sin
2. We need continual dependence from temptation
3. We need a healthy fear of God
4. All our gains can become losses if we fail to stay pure

##### **C. I Pray that God Would Keep This Church from Evil**

1. The devil would love to destroy this church
2. I pray that this church would continue to be strong doctrinally
3. Jabez sees the danger of falling into sin

#### Conclusion:

1. God granted Jabez his request
2. Our Lord longs to do the same for us
3. Are we willing to pray and believe like Jabez?
4. Ask God to bless you and then live so that He can bless you
5. Pray that God will enlarge you and then do your part
6. Pray for God's presence and then do all you can to maintain a close relationship with God
7. Pray for protection from sin and then turn from sin – run from it

Many years ago there was a dear old lady living in Philadelphia who had a very wayward son. This young man had been brought up in church and Sunday school, but he had drifted away from everything holy. He had gone to sea and had become a very rough, careless, godless sailor.

One night his mother was awakened with a very deep sense of need upon her heart. When fully awake, she thought of her son and she was impressed that he was in great danger; as a result, she got up, threw on a dressing gown, knelt by her bedside, and prayed earnestly that God would undertake for the boy, whatever his need was. She didn't understand it, but after praying for perhaps two or three hours there came to her a sense of rest and peace, and she felt sure in her heart that God had answered. She got back into bed and slept soundly until the morning. Day after day she kept wondering to herself why she was thus awakened and moved to prayer, but somehow or other she could not feel the need to pray for that boy any more; rather she praised God for something which she felt sure He had done for her son.

Several weeks passed. One day there was a knock at the door. When she went to the door-there stood her boy! As soon as he entered the room, he said, "Mother, I'm saved!" Then he told her a wonderful story.

He told how a few weeks earlier, his ship had been tossed in mid-Atlantic by a terrific storm; and it looked as though there were no hope of riding it through. One of the masts had snapped; the captain called the men to come and cut it away. They stepped out, he among them, cursing and reviling God because they had to be out in such an awful night. They were cutting away this mast when suddenly the ship gave a lurch, and a great wave caught this young man and carried him overboard.

As he struggled almost helplessly with the great waves of the sea, the awful thought came to him, "I'm lost forever!" Suddenly, he remembered a hymn that he had often heard sung in his boyhood days, "There is life in a look at the crucified One; There is life at this moment for thee; Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved; Unto Him who was nailed to the tree."

He cried out in agony of heart, "Oh, God, I look, I look to Jesus." Then he was carried to the top of the waves and lost consciousness.

Hours afterwards when the storm had ceased and the men came out to clear the deck, they found him lying unconscious, crowded up against a bulwark.

Evidently, while one wave had carried him off the deck, another had carried him back again. The sailors took him into the cabin and gave him restoratives. When he came to, the first words from his lips were, "Thank God, I'm saved!"

From that time on he had an assurance of God's salvation that meant everything to him.

Then his mother told him how she had prayed for him that night. They realized that it was just at the time when he was in such desperate circumstances, and God had heard and answered.

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.