

The Jabez Prayer: The Hand of God
Lynn Haven UMC
June 19, 2016

Introduction

The third petition Jabez makes in his prayer is that God's hand would be with him. Throughout the Bible we are repeatedly shown how the hand of God is synonymous with the power of God. Remember how He parted the Red Sea, sent manna from heaven, healed the sick, caused the blind to see, the lame to walk, etc.? And of course, the ultimate act of His power: He conquered death! When we put ourselves in "big faith" situations, where we leave ourselves no human way out, we are forced to trust the hand of God. Only then can we truly experience the blessing of being grasped by His hand of mercy. This is the place where real faith is born.

Digging Deeper

Divine Power

1. "God's hand rarely intervenes when our own hand owns the problem." (Bruce Wilkinson; The Prayer of Jabez). Have you ever been in a sink or swim situation where you were in over your head and "big faith" was required of you? Discuss how trusting in God's power enhanced the blessing you received.
2. Read Acts 11: 11-21. God's hand was with the people as they spread the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. As a result, many people became believers. That same power lives in us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 11:16 tells us that just as John baptized with water, we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. That's a mighty empowerment! How can we use this gift to touch the hearts of non-believers in our community?

Divine Protection

1. We have all heard (or used) the expression, "That was a God thing!" When we experience that feeling of divine providence we often attribute it to the hand (or protection) of God in our lives. Describe an experience you have had where something happened that could only be explained by the intervention of God in your life.
2. Ezra 8:22b-23 tells of how the people of Israel fasted and prayed for God's protection as they journeyed back to their homeland. Fasting and prayer are acts of spiritual discipline that can produce greater connection with God. If you have fasted for spiritual purposes, share with the group how that practice impacted the deepening of your trust in God.

Divine Provision

1. Read Numbers 11:18-23. Even though Moses had seen God perform countless miracles for the people of Israel, he still doubted that God could do what He promised. If someone like Moses doubted after seeing, it makes a lot of sense that people like us, who are thousands of years removed from those firsthand experiences, might also doubt. Hebrews 11:1 (NIV) says: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Share an example of how you have had to trust God to provide something during a time when you were unable to do so.

Divine Presence

1. We don't know what our future holds, but we know who holds it. It's a comfort to know that God's got the whole world in His hands. We sing these very words to our children to calm and lull them to sleep. If we trust God is in control, why do we struggle with our ability to recognize His presence in our daily lives?
2. The greatest blessing we can receive is God's presence. Throughout history, Christians have sung of how they desire for God to walk with them, be by their side, live on the inside, etc. Worshiping Him by listening to music is an excellent way to remind us of God's presence as we maneuver through our daily activities. Prayer, fasting, daily Bible study and devotionals also allow us much needed one on one time with God. What are some other ways we can enhance our awareness of God's presence in our lives?

Conclusion

Jabez is remembered, not because of what he did, but because of what he prayed. He cried out for God's hand to be with him. He knew that he would need that supernatural power to be able to effectively carry out the large tasks God was sure to lay out for him by granting him the desires of his heart.

As a confession that we're in "over our heads" and as an act of trust in God's ability to rescue us, let's pray this prayer daily, "Dear God, stretch forth your hand from heaven and fill me with power from on high. Protect me and provide for my needs out of Your unlimited resources. Help me to live in Your presence so I can accomplish Your Kingdom's work in the world. Amen."