

The Jabez Prayer: Keep Me from Evil
Lynn Haven UMC
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Introduction

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." 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. (1 Chronicles 4:9-10 NKJV)

We are all familiar with the Lord's prayer. In it, we ask that God "lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil." Temptation presents itself in many forms with Satan seeking to attack us at every opportunity. He especially loves to pounce upon those who are working with God to make disciples. Do you remember those old cartoons where there is a decision to be made and we see an angel and a devil on the character's shoulders? The Holy Spirit living in us is that angel on our shoulder whispering His loving guidance. But Satan has planted many seeds in this world that will try to drown out those whispers. Only by putting on the full armor of God can we have any hope of defeating his evil plans for our lives.

Digging Deeper

Keep us from the evil of...

Pride

1. In Matthew 6:1 we are told to avoid doing our good deeds publicly for the admiration of others. This will yield no reward from our Father in heaven. Is it wrong to share about our good deeds for the purpose of inspiring others to do the same? How can we do this without boasting? Takeaway: To God be the glory! We can all only be thankful for the wonderful ways in which God has chosen to use us to accomplish His will!
2. In both James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5b the Bible tells us that God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. When the weapon of humility is employed, pride retreats. What does it mean to live your life with humility? Why is it so hard for us to hold in the desire to "toot our own horns"?

Power

1. If we think of ourselves as "partners with Christ" in ministry, we take away our selfish desire to be in control. But how can we be a partner with Christ if we never look to Him as the source of our power? Acts 4:29-31 tells us how the early disciples prayed for boldness to be able to preach God's Word. Can you recall a time in your life when you relinquished control and trusted solely in God's strength to guide your actions? If so, take a moment to share how that experience strengthened your relationship with Him. If you are drawing a blank, pray for a partnership with God that is evident in the way you live each day.
2. Do you struggle with the need to be in control and do things by your own power? If we truly want God's hand, blessing and protection to be upon us, we must employ the weapon of prayer. As we heard in this week's sermon, it is the switch that turns on the power! When faced with difficult times, the first instinct of most believers is to pray and ask for the prayers of others.

God delights in our prayers, or conversations with Him. What are some ways in which we could incorporate prayer into our daily routine?

Possessions

1. 1 Timothy 6:17-18 puts forth the command to be rich in good deeds; generous and willing to share. In this week's sermon we heard this quote, "Money makes a great servant, but a terrible master." Money in and of itself is not evil. As a matter of fact, it can solve a lot of earthly problems. However, the love of money above all else is what brings evil into the conversation. Do we live in such a way that our generosity exceeds our own four walls? Something to think about: If all your prayers were answered, would it change the world, or just yours?
2. How many times upon finishing up with a yard sale have you felt such relief at finally being "clutter free", only to find yourself a year later with a brand new pile of "someone else's treasures"? First world problems such as these are an indicator that perhaps we place too much time and effort in accumulating "stuff" and not enough time cultivating a heart that seeks to bless others with the resources with which we have been given. As we learned in this week's sermon, giving is the weapon we must raise against the deceitfulness of possessions. Discuss ways you and your family might reevaluate the spending of your time and money so they can be used as "power tools" for God's purposes.

Conclusion

Jabez is remembered, not because of what he did, but because of what he prayed. He prayed for God to "keep him from evil". He knew that with God's hand and blessings upon him, while carrying out the work associated with an increased ministry, he would be vehemently attacked by the evil one dwelling in this world. Where goodness resides, evil will always be lurking in the shadows trying to stomp out its light. The good news is: God is love. And love always wins.

One of the things He wants us to do is to live the Jabez life. Each day this week let us pray:

"O Lord, bless me indeed, enlarge my ministry territory, let your mighty hand be with me, and keep me from evil. All for the glory of Jesus I pray. Amen."