Bless Me Indeed!

07/24/16

1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV) 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.

This prayer has come to be called the Prayer of Jabez. Books and sermons have been written based upon this little known man. The dry genealogical listings of Chronicles is briefly interrupted with a glimmer of light. We are told, “*Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, “I gave birth to him in pain*.”

That is all that we know of this man called Jabez, other than the prayer that he uttered. There is no further reference, no further information given on Jabez. We are left only with this prayer.

But what a prayer it is; apparently one spoken with such sincerity and conviction that God granted the request. We don’t know how God blessed Jabez, or what the outcome was, or how his life changed. All we know is that somehow, in some way, God did indeed bless Jabez, did enlarge his territory. God’s hand was with Jabez, and kept him from evil so that he would not cause pain.

I don’t know about you, but I would like God to bless me indeed! Wouldn’t you? Wouldn’t you like to be blessed by God in a powerful way? Not just any ordinary standard blessing, but blessed indeed. A blessing given to us by God with such power, with such potential for producing wonderful good in our lives, a blessing so incomparable that we must declare that we have been blessed “indeed”!

That one phrase is filled with possibilities, depending upon how you say it. “Oh, that You would BLESS me INDEED.” That’s how we’ve been looking at it. But what if you said, “Oh, that YOU would bless me INDEED”? We are blessed by our parents, our friends, our children, and our associates. We are blessed by their company, their love, their service and attention to us. We are blessed by our jobs, and our sources of income. We are blessed in so many ways.

But what if we were blessed by God in such a way that we absolutely recognized it as God’s Spirit touching us? It may be the same blessings of family and friends that were just mentioned, but we perceive it not as a standard blessing but a magnificent direct blessing from God’s heart to ours.

I believe this is how God wants us to see all of our blessings: from the small to the great, as direct love-filled intentions to bring good into our lives. It’s just that they show up looking like a job, or a life mate, or a parent. In fact, anything that opens our hearts to God and brings our thoughts to God is a blessing, whether it is a challenge or tranquility.

So, whatever we see as a blessing in our lives, can we see it as God’s deliberate attempt to bestow upon us a marvelous gift? It’s not just our loved ones shining their love upon us, our friends sharing their appreciation – but God blessing us indeed!

Jabez asks that God would expand his territory. This can mean many different things, other than just the simple reference to land or property. It means abundant prosperity in all areas of our life: not just finances, but friends and relationships, joy, peace, health, wisdom, security, ways to help others, spiritual insight, strength of body, mind and heart … all of God’s good; all of God’s Kingdom.

Jabez asked that God’s hand be with him so that he would be kept from evil and that he would cause no pain. This phrase is all about others: To be kept from mental and physical temptations so that he would not affect or influence others in a negative way, causing them pain. He was asking God to calm his words, thoughts, behaviors and attitudes so he would not hurt anyone.

We don’t know what Jabez did, how he lived, or who he was that he would earn God’s approval. It is indicated that he was more honorable than his brothers. Perhaps that’s an indication. Perhaps if we were honorable – if we were conscientious toward others, truthful, kind, honest, integrous, ethical, reliable, and trustworthy – if we were honorable, then we would capture God’s attention.

My personal feeling is that the description that he was more honorable than his brothers was simply a way of saying that he dared to listen to God and open his heart to God’s vision and guidance. He was honorable toward God.

As Children of God, we are deserving of God’s love right now; we are worthy of God’s good. What Jabez did was open a channel of communication with Spirit, connect, and ask. He was humble, sincere, faithful, and expectant.

Based upon his prayer, he already had some prosperity and asked for an enlargement of what he currently possessed. This is not unlike the parable Christ tells in Luke, about the nobleman who left to be appointed King. In his absence he gave ten servants each 10 mina, pieces of money, and asked them to put this money to work. Upon the King’s return, he asked three of them how they had fared. The first servant had earned 10 more mina. “Well done, my good servant,” said the King, and rewarded him with ruling over 10 cities. The second one had earned 5 more minas and was rewarded with five cities.

The third servant had not generated anymore and made excuses as to how he was afraid of the King. He was called a wicked servant. The King said, “Couldn’t you have at least put it in a savings account and generated a little interest?” So the King took the mina from that servant and gave it to the servant who already had 10 minas. The King stated, “Everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

Now before we feel too sorry for the servant who generated nothing, we need to know that these mina are metaphors for the gifts that God has given us; for the health that God has given us, for the love that we have been given; for the opportunities to demonstrate the Christ within us to others. These minas reflect all of God’s blessing for us.

If we don’t use our bodies, move them, exercise them, they are taken from us through atrophy. The same is true for any of our gifts, talents, and abilities. If we don’t use it; we lose it.

One of the lessons of Jabez’ prayer is to be fruitful and multiply. Adam and Eve are instructed to be fruitful and multiply. Noah is told the same exact thing. To Bible scholars the phrase “to multiply” means more than just reproduce. It means to increase, to expand in consciousness and awareness, to grow in wisdom.

This is God’s intention for us: to become all that we are capable of being; to use all of our gifts and talents and abilities fully and apply them toward helping others and Creation to become all that they can be. We are to evolve and produce.

When we make excuses to remain idle, we thwart God’s intentions. When we choose not to love each other, we inhibit our connection with God. Yes, God is constantly reaching out to us, but our choice to remain stunted and inert blinds us to the call of Christ and denies us God’s good plans for us.

Jabez reminds us of our innate desire to prosper, produce, do something of value, and add significance; to do something that gains results. Christ said in John 15:8 -- “*When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father*.”

Some people may be reticent to ask God for more because they are afraid; they are afraid that they are already too busy. Their plate is full. Yet by placing our faith and asking for increased blessings allows God to increase the size of our plate. God will never give us more than we can handle. We are always develop more ability, more strength, and more wisdom to match our willingness to accept God’s blessings.

“Oh, that You would bless me indeed,” cries our soul! God is drawing us to Him; helping us to rise to the level of bearing much fruit. He wants us to become the 10-mina person…the person who embraces God’s will and asks for Gods help in achieving the greater abundance that sometimes we see as impossible.

It is my prayer that awareness expands so that all of our actions, our entire lives, are serving God – not just others or ourselves, but all that we do we do for our Divine One. By doing so, we are blessing others, and ourselves, and we can know and be fully expectant that God will bless us indeed.

Let us pray…