

***“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,
“Oh that you would bless me indeed,
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)***

Part 3

JESUS – OUR ROLE MODEL

Today we continue our reflections on the prayer of Jabez and the condition of blessing under which we, as believers, are graced to live. We now take a glimpse at the Lord’s life and the times in which He moved in receiving blessing and/or releasing blessing. Please note that this is not an exhaustive study, but a simple overview to contextualise blessing in the New Testament in the life of our Lord.

At Birth

“Then Simeon blessed them and said...” Luke 2:34

We can see evidence of blessing throughout the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus. At the time of Jesus’ birth, Simeon took the Lord in his arms and blessed him, as well as also speaking a powerful blessing over Joseph and his mother Mary. The blessing of God is thus affirmed afresh in the New Testament context as being a blessing for the entire family and one that overflows in our lives even from the moment of our birth. The love of God our Father flows continually to us through the Son and by the Holy Spirit into every aspect of our lives.

In Ministry

*“Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”
Luke 9:16-17*

When Christ multiplied the loaves and the fishes for the hungry crowds, He first blessed them, giving thanks to God and then presented them to the disciples to share amongst the people. In blessing the humble provision in the name of the Lord it miraculously multiplied into provision that was able to feed thousands. Blessing the provision we have in our hands in the name of Jesus Christ is a powerful prayer that acknowledges the omnipotence and love of our Creator God, which releases a miracle flow of our Father’s abundance into our lives. Blessing and faith operate side by side.

“But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14:13-14

When speaking about caring for the poor and needy, Jesus told His beloved disciples that they would be blessed as they ministered to the poor and the sick, indeed, this would be given as an eternal reward. It is important to realise that as we reach out in Christ’s love to share the Gospel we do so from a condition of blessedness. Our witness and works of love release blessing both to those to whom we minister to and also flow back as reciprocal blessings from the Lord into our own lives.

“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.”

At the time of the Last Supper, the Lord blessed the elements of bread and wine and shared them with His disciples. The institution of the Lord’s Supper was a time of Kingdom blessing at its inauguration and continues to release untold blessing to the global church as we meet in holy intimacy and union with Christ and each other. (Luke 22)

Furthermore, our Lord Jesus broke bread with the two disciples who travelled with Him on the road to Emmaus, and in so doing, their spiritual eyes were enlightened to comprehend and acknowledge by faith declaration of the glory of the Risen Christ. The blessing of sharing the bread and wine is a means by which we remember Christ and His atoning death and resurrection until He returns. When we remember the victory of Calvary we stand on the firm foundation of every blessing Christ appropriated for His bride – forgiveness, healing and wholeness; righteousness, peace and joy. Truly John understood this new covenant truth when he wrote, *“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.” John 1:16*

At the Triumphal entry to Jerusalem during the time of Passover, the people of Jerusalem recognised Christ as their Messianic King; part of their praise expression to the Lord was to shout, *“Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Luke 19:38*

When we come to realise the magnitude of who Christ is and all that He has sacrificed for the salvation of mankind, we will bless the Lord with all of our hearts, strength, soul and mind. Likewise, when we comprehend just how blessed we are by God, our mouths cannot contain the joy felt deep down in our souls. As we correlate understanding of blessedness with crying out to God, we remember Jabez (the inspiration of our study) and we see a picture of Jabez emerging that simultaneously convinces and perhaps also convicts us of our need to be more active in the processing of blessing. *“Oh that you would bless me indeed!”* This may lead us to conclude, therefore, that the nature of blessing is not passive.

After His Death, Resurrection and prior to the Lord's Ascension

Having established that Christ’s birth was marked by blessing, importantly, we also acknowledge that Jesus blessed His disciples after his death and resurrection (just prior to His ascension into heaven). **The Lord’s last recorded act of gracious benevolence towards His dearest disciples was to bless them.** Jesus birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension were all marked with a particular Kingdom hallmark from the Father – blessing! The Risen Lord *“lifted up his hands, and blessed them.” Luke 24:50*

This leaves us in no doubt of the Lord’s willingness and ability to bless His servants. Today let’s open our hearts and minds afresh and remember Christ has lifted up His holy, pierced hands on the Cross to pour untold blessing upon the church. His blood sacrifice is the means by which we are blessed. It is an eternal blessing of inestimable beauty and worth.

Father, we bow our hearts and minds before you in humility and adoration; we quiet ourselves before your throne of grace and we ask today that you would enable us to be

active by faith in receiving and releasing blessing to the glory of your Name. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

In His great love,

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Part 4

ENLARGE MY TERRITORY

Jabez' prayer requesting blessing and increase from the Lord might be described as:

- A prayer of divine agitation i.e. it breaks the spiritual status quo, passivity and inactivity in our lives
- A prayer of faith, hope and love in the goodness, power and authority of God
- A prayer that is a choice for God in overcoming personal circumstances, problems or a past trauma and stepping into the new purposes and plans God has for each one of our lives.

When we pray for God to bless us and “enlarge our territory,” we are praying from the perspective of a lifestyle that has experienced the investment of God with the expectation of a supernatural return that releases fruit that will last for all eternity. The result of us receiving God's blessing is (a) adoration to the Lord and (b) equipping and empowerment for effective service for God. When we ask God to bless us it releases His limitless power, goodness, love and favour. God's blessings release His Kingdom!

It's NOT a selfish prayer because it is a prayer that glorifies God because it is about asking God to enlarge our life so that we can make a greater impact for Him. This type of prayer will cause a paradigm shift in our thinking and appropriation of blessing as we walk with God. It is a prayer that is released from the heart that believes in the God of miracle working power to bring transformation in the nations.

When we enter into the realm of increase and acceleration in our ministries by the grace of God, there are a few basic principles we need to understand:

1. **Resource – where our opportunities overtake our abilities** - Our physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and financial resources are all stretched when we shift from the position of where we presently stand into the faith place of where we declare we hope to be. God is faithful to send us His Holy Spirit, angelic assistance, strength by grace and people and resource to enable us to fulfil the God-given assignment or mission before us. The prayer of Jabez for “enlargement” begins with acknowledging our need to decrease so that God might increase in us.
2. **Relationships – where God orchestrates divine opportunities, appointments and sovereignly ordained destiny milestones** - It is important to acknowledge that Jabez' prayer for spiritual enlargement encompasses the need for new and ongoing God-

ordained relationships, strategic connections and Kingdom alliances as we interact with others both in the body of Christ and in society. There are certain people in our lives whom God has entrusted with keys to unlock destiny.

3. **Area of Influence** - When God increases our “territory” for His glory, it is with the intention that we impact our sphere of influence for the Kingdom. We will experience increased responsibilities, but we can rest in the knowledge that with the gift of “call” comes the grace to walk in the call and all that it encompasses.
4. **Surrender** – surrender teaches us to trust God in a deeper way. God will not lead us where He is not willing to sustain us. Surrender is a pre-cursor to sustenance = divine provision.

“Enlarge my territory” isn’t a place where our training or past experience can take us although they may serve as a foundation for a new Kingdom building work. It is only out of the abundance of being enlarged by God’s grace that we gain the experience we did not have to fulfil the Kingdom task(s) before us. To ask God to enlarge your territory is another way of asking God, “Lord, use me - give me more ministry opportunities to bring glory to You!”

God teaches us how to manage the resource He has maximised in our hands. Stewardship is the gift of wisdom and compassion in management of God-given resource for the purpose for which God intended it to be used to bless and be a blessing!

In His great grace,
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