HAVEN OF REST BIBLE CHURCH • SERMON STUDY GUIDE

The Prayer of Jabez

Wednesday - November 18, 2026 • PM Service

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Speaker: Pastor David Spivey | **Primary Text:** 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 | **Supporting Scriptures:** 1 Chronicles 2:55; Proverbs 10:22; Isaiah 54:1-8; Genesis 25:26; Genesis 32:24-30; Genesis 35:18; 1 Samuel 1:11; 1 Samuel 4:19-22; Zechariah 4:6; Genesis 18:22-33; Exodus 32:32; Exodus 33:18; Matthew 15:21-28; John 15:1-8; Acts 10:34; Romans 8:31; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Ephesians 6:10; Colossians 1:27



Through humble, bold prayer to the God of Israel, a man born under the shadow of sorrow rose to become more honorable than his brethren.

Core Message: Hidden inside the genealogies of First Chronicles stands Jabez, a man whose very name meant pain, yet who refused to let his past wounds define his character or limit his God. By calling upon the God of Israel for genuine blessing, expanded kingdom territory, sustaining divine power, and deliverance from sin and grief, Jabez became a living testimony that God honors bold, surrendered faith and turns personal sorrow into enduring spiritual blessing for others.

1. Primary Scripture Reading

> 9 And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.
>
> 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 might not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.
>
> **— 1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10 (KJV)**

2. Hidden Treasures in the Genealogies: Every Name Matters to God

When believers reach the opening chapters of First Chronicles during their daily Bible reading, many feel tempted to skim quickly past long lists of unfamiliar names. While faithful saints like Kim and Rita rightly delight in tracing lineages that ultimately lead straight to the Lord Jesus Christ, most of us relate to the experience of opening old county deed books in the Clerk of Court office. As Pastor Spivey observed while examining handwritten nineteenth-century records alongside Brother Mitch, dry archival registers do not look thrilling at first glance, yet they serve an indispensable purpose by preserving real history, rightful inheritances, and human accountability. In the exact same way, biblical genealogies prove that our faith is anchored in real history, real families, and real individuals whom the Almighty refuses to forget.

In the year 2000, Christian author Bruce Wilkinson drew worldwide attention to two overlooked verses tucked inside this genealogical register through his bestselling little book, *The Prayer of Jabez*. Originally expecting to distribute

around thirty thousand copies at a prayer breakfast, publishers watched it climb past nine million copies. Whenever a popular book highlights a Scripture passage, wise Christians receive what aligns with God's Word while testing every emphasis carefully against the whole counsel of Scripture. We must never reduce Jabez's prayer to a selfish formula for material prosperity; rather, we must read it as the heartfelt cry of a godly man seeking holiness, usefulness, and divine protection in the midst of an ordinary, unnamed generation.

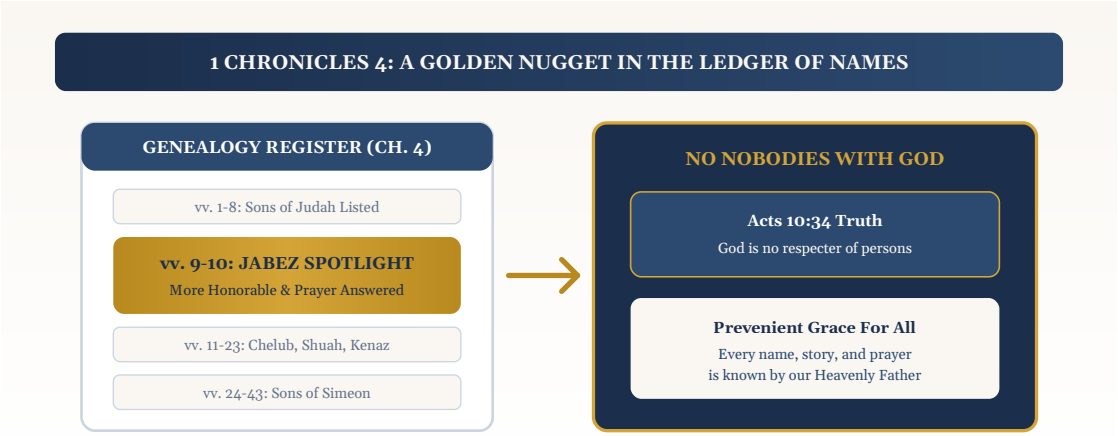
Why God Spotlighted an Obscure Name

Right in the middle of the tribe of Judah's descendants, the Holy Spirit pauses the roll call for two golden verses: *'And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren... And God granted him that which he requested.'* Notice that phrase at the end: God granted what he requested. Too often we forfeit spiritual victory simply because we never earnestly ask the Father for it. To illustrate how human pride overlooks ordinary people, consider the newspaper cartoon from the Apollo moon-landing era showing two astronauts stepping onto Mars after months together in a cramped capsule. The captain dominated the frame with a microphone, announcing to Earth, 'This is William P. Throgmorton—and what's-his-name—and we have just made it!'

- **No 'What's-His-Names' With God:** Scripture plainly declares in Acts 10:34 that *'God is no respecter of persons.'* In the kingdom of heaven, there are no forgotten co-pilots, no invisible teenagers, and no second-class believers.
- **Universal Prevenient Grace:** From a Wesleyan-Arminian conservative holiness standpoint, this truth flows directly from God's prevenient grace. Christ died for every human being, and the Holy Spirit extends genuine grace and moral opportunity to every single soul, regardless of family pedigree or social status.
- **Personal Moral Responsibility:** Because God shows no favoritism, no one is locked out of blessing by secret decree, and no one enters blessing by accident. Every individual may respond to God's drawing grace through repentance, faith, and consecrated obedience.

Perspective	How Genealogies & People Are Viewed	Spiritual Outcome
Worldly / Human Pride	Highlights only famous leaders while treating ordinary lives as 'what's-his-names.'	Produces discouragement, comparison, and spiritual passivity.
Fatalistic Thinking	Assumes family background or hidden decrees permanently lock a person's destiny.	Quenches earnest prayer and fosters excuses for sin or defeat.
Biblical Holiness Truth	Recognizes every soul is precious to God and invited to seek His full blessing.	Inspires humble confidence, bold intercession, and honorable living.

Young people and adults alike need this foundational reassurance tonight: your storyline, your private burdens, your hidden battles, and your quiet obedience matter intensely to the God of Israel. You are never merely a line item in a dusty ledger. When a single believer dares to step out of spiritual mediocrity and call upon the Lord with an honest heart, Heaven pauses to record that prayer for eternity.



Tucked inside the historical registers of First Chronicles 4, the story of Jabez shines like gold to remind us that God knows every name and answers sincere prayer.

3. The Problem of Jabez: Parental Grief, Labels, and Prophetic Names

Every believer knows something about problems, and Jabez's story opens with two heavy difficulties right at the threshold of life: his mother's lingering sorrow and the painful moniker stamped upon him from infancy. Scripture tells us, *'his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.'* We need not assume his mother was wicked or unloving; in fact, she was likely a devout Israelite woman enduring deep physical or emotional agony. Yet people often unintentionally wound those they love most by naming and viewing them through the lens of their own unresolved pain. That is also why wise Christians avoid telling a grieving friend, 'I totally understand,' for none of us walks inside another person's exact history or scars.

In ancient Israel, names were far more than pleasant sounds; they functioned almost as prophetic declarations spoken over a child's future. Consider the tragic parallel in 1 Samuel 4:19-22, when the wife of Phinehas went into labor upon hearing that Israel had suffered military defeat, the Ark of God had been captured, and both her husband and father-in-law Eli were dead. Dying in childbirth, she

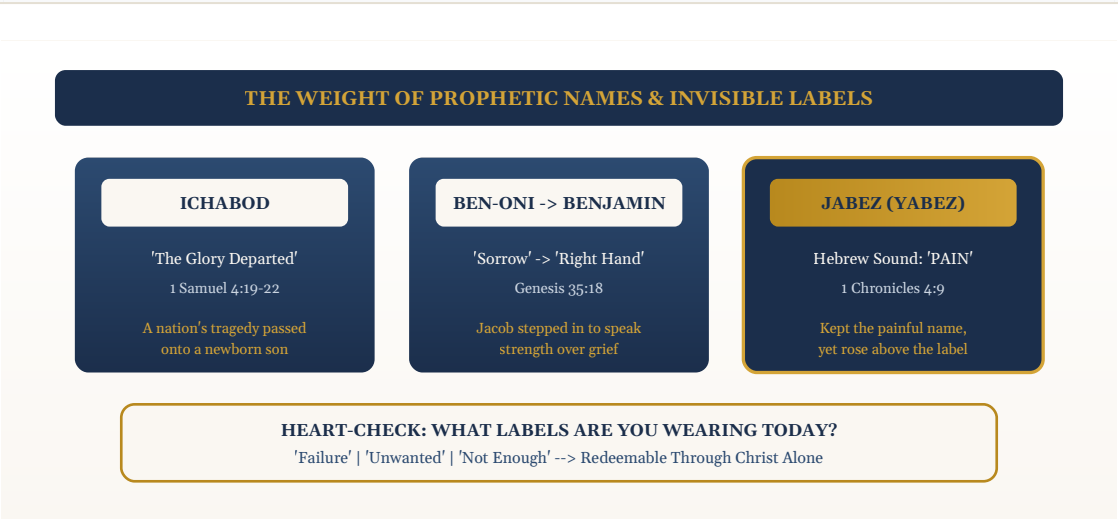
named her newborn son *Ichabod*, meaning 'The glory is departed from Israel,' turning an innocent boy's identity into a walking monument to national tragedy. Likewise, Rebekah watched twin Esau emerge first and named the younger twin grabbing his heel *Jacob*—'heel-grasper' or 'supplanter,' one who pulls others back to push himself ahead (Genesis 25:26). Later, dying Rachel named her second son *Ben-oni*, 'son of my sorrow,' though Jacob quickly stepped in to rename him *Benjamin*, 'son of my right hand' or strength (Genesis 35:18).

Invisible Labels We Carry

Think carefully about what Jabez heard every single day of his childhood. In English we pronounce 'Jabez' smoothly, yet in Hebrew it sounds nearly identical to the word for pain and grief (*otseb*). Whenever his mother called him to dinner, or a neighbor grew frustrated over an unfinished chore, what Jabez literally heard was: 'Pain, get inside! Hey Pain, how did work go today? You really are a pain!' Pastor Spivey reminded us of the classroom exercise where students wrote one self-descriptive word on a nametag. Alongside 'athletic' or 'creative,' one student quietly wrote *failure*, another wrote *unwanted*, and another wrote *not enough*. Similarly, Brother Mike's powerful testimony at youth convention and Menorize revealed how a schoolmaster's harsh, crushing treatment branded two rambunctious boys as uniquely evil, pushing a dark trajectory over Mike's early life until God's grace intervened.

Biblical Character / Element	Historical Role	Spiritual Type / Picture	Holiness Truth & Application
Ichabod (1 Sam 4:21)	Son born to Phinehas's dying widow during Ark's capture.	Identity defined entirely by defeat and departed glory.	Never let spiritual decline around you quench personal pursuit of God's glory.
Jacob (Gen 25:26)	Younger twin grasping Esau's heel at birth.	The carnal, self-seeking bent of the natural heart.	Self-will must be confessed and crucified before God transforms our nature.
Ben-oni / Benjamin (Gen 35:18)	Rachel's youngest son renamed by his father Jacob.	Grief overwritten by covenant strength and honor.	Godly spiritual fathers and the church must speak faith rather than bitterness over youth.
Jabez (1 Chron 4:9)	Judahite man named 'Pain' by his suffering mother.	A believer scarred by early labels who seeks God anyway.	Your past pain does not possess final authority over your holy character.

Whether spoken by a weary parent, an unwise teacher, a cruel classmate, or our own regret over past sins, invisible labels cling tightly to human hearts. Yet the conservative holiness message proclaims liberating hope: though sin and sorrow leave deep marks, no earthly label can stop a soul who turns wholeheartedly toward the grace of Jesus Christ.



Biblical names carried prophetic weight, yet Jabez refused to let a name meaning 'pain' trap him in defeat.

4. Redemptive Grace: When God Works Over Your Pain

How does God handle a painful past, a flawed nature, or a burdensome label? Scripture reveals two distinct ways the Almighty works in His children's lives, and understanding both is essential for spiritual maturity. First, look at Jacob at the brook Jabbok in Genesis 32:24-30. All night long Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord—likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ Himself. Before morning broke, the Angel asked a piercing question: *'What is thy name?'* God did not ask because He suffered amnesia; He asked to draw out an honest confession. For Jacob to answer 'Jacob' meant confessing, 'I am a heel-grasper, a schemer, a self-centered trickster who has spent a lifetime pushing others down to get ahead.' Only when Jacob finally humbled himself and confessed the idolatrous self-bent of his own heart did he conquer—winning the wrestling match by total surrender! God then changed his name to *Israel*, a prince with God, because God gives grace to the humble while resisting the proud.

Yet notice the striking contrast in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10: God did *not* change Jabez's name! Heaven never leaned down and said, 'From this day forward, your name

shall be Moses or Victor.' Jabez continued walking through his village answering to the name 'Pain.' Yet the Holy Spirit wrote over his life, *'And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren.'* That matches the experience of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord to remove his thorn in the flesh, doubtless believing he could plant more churches and advance the gospel faster without it. Instead, Jesus answered, *'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.'*

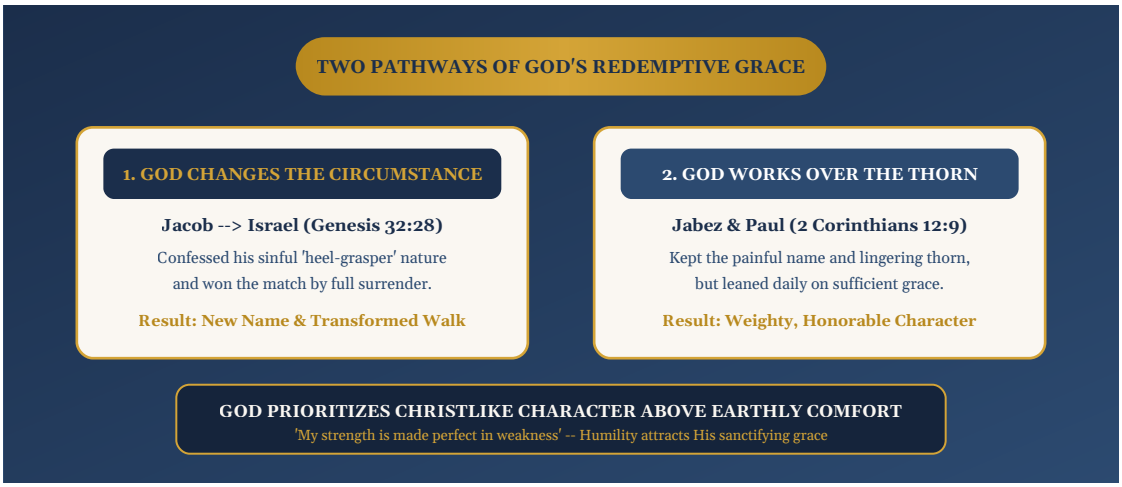
> **Word Study & Holiness Doctrine: 'More Honorable' (Kabed)**
> The Hebrew word translated *honourable* in 1 Chronicles 4:9 is **kabed**, literally meaning 'weighty, substantial, respected, or glorified.' In biblical holiness, true honor has nothing to do with social popularity or a trouble-free life. Rather, a believer gains spiritual weight when God's sanctifying grace purifies the heart from self-will and conforms the soul to Christ's image—even right in the middle of lifelong thorns. Notice also how thankful we can be that Scripture leaves both Paul's thorn and Jabez's mother's exact sorrow unspecified, allowing the Holy Spirit to apply this truth to millions of believers facing vastly different trials.

Character Above Comfort

Too many modern churchgoers absorb an unbiblical theology that imagines God exists mainly to make our earthly lives smooth and comfortable. Nothing could be further from the truth! Comfort sits very low on God's priority list, while holy character sits at the very top. Our Heavenly Father loves you too much to spoil your soul with ease if discomfort is required to drive you to your knees and conform you to Jesus. Sometimes, as with Jacob, God mercifully changes your external circumstance or name. Other times, as with Paul and Jabez, God leaves the thorny circumstance intact and works *redemptively over it*, turning your deepest weakness into a sanctuary of His power.

In Plain English: A Youth Heart-Check on Hard Seasons

Maybe you have prayed for God to fix a tough family situation, heal an emotional wound, or remove a pressure at school, and nothing seemed to budge. Do not grow bitter or accuse God of ignoring you! Ask yourself honestly: 'Has God ever asked me my real name—showing me the selfish attitude, pride, or hidden sin inside my own heart?' When we stop demanding an easy life and instead surrender our whole heart to Jesus, He fills us with the Holy Spirit so we reflect His sweetness right inside the hard place.



Whether God alters the outward circumstance like Jacob's name or empowers us above an enduring thorn like Paul and Jabez, His ultimate goal is Christlike holiness.

5. Bless Me Indeed: Pursuing God's Real, Sorrow-Free Blessing

Having examined the problem of Jabez, we enter the fourfold petition of his prayer. His first cry was: *'Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed!'* Make me a truly blessed man! In Middle English, the phrase 'in deed' began as two separate words

meaning 'in fact, in reality, and in concrete action,' rather than mere empty talk. Like Sister Mary Ann, who prefers genuine deeds of love over flattering speeches, Jabez was not asking for a hollow compliment or a surface appearance of religion. In Hebrew, the construction *barek tebarekeni* doubles the verb—literally 'blessing, Thou wilt bless me!' It is an earnest plea for authentic, eternal, Spirit-wrought spiritual prosperity. As Proverbs 10:22 promises, *'The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.'* What a striking promise for a man named 'Sorrow'—God's true blessing brings joy without the bitter sting that worldly riches leave behind!

Notice too that Jabez did not dictate *how* God had to deliver that blessing. Many believers pray strictly for ease, comfort, and smooth sailing, forgetting the powerful truth captured in the song *Blessings*: 'What if Your blessings come through raindrops? What if Your healing comes through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near?' Too often we pray for quick relief, yet our Heavenly Father loves us too deeply to let our prayers remain shallow. True blessing means knowing God intimately, walking in clean-hearted fellowship with Him, and being conformed to His holiness—even when that blessing arrives disguised as a storm.

Historical & Spiritual Heritage: William Carey and Holy Risk

In the late 1700s, a poor English shoemaker named William Carey became gripped by God's call to carry the gospel to unreached nations. Tragically, hyper-Calvinist fatalism gripped many churches of his day; one older minister famously rebuked him: 'Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.' Carey rejected that false theology as unscriptural nonsense and staked his life on a motto rooted in Wesleyan-Arminian missionary urgency: **'Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.'** Even inside the 'buckle of the Bible Belt,' believers must search the Scriptures with teachable hearts so comfortable human traditions never blind us to God's actual Word.

Three Pillars of Praying 'Bless Me Indeed'

1. Reality Over Words

Refuse shallow religious slogans. Seek tangible transformation—victory over willful sin, clean affections, and a living walk with Christ.

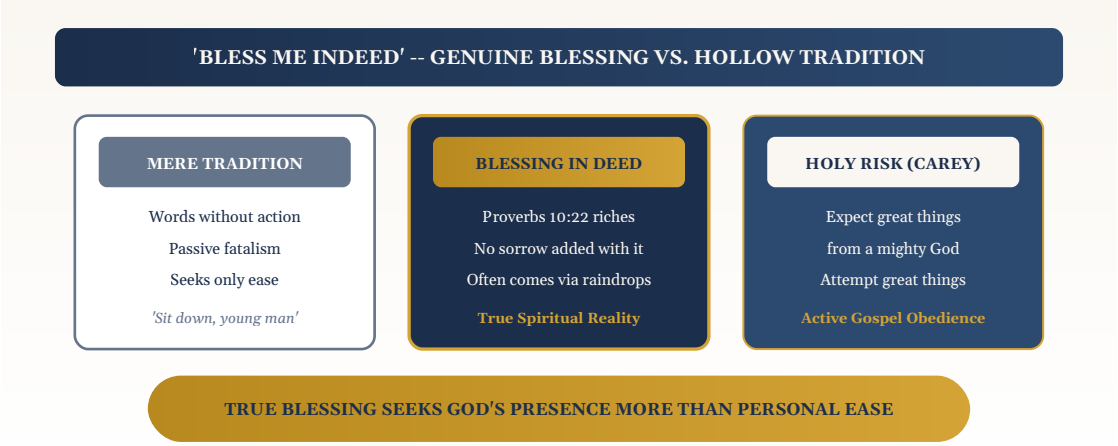
2. Scripture Over Tradition

Never rest on 'that is just how I was raised.' Let the Holy Spirit unteach human misconceptions and align your mind with the Bible.

3. Courage for Holy Risk

Nothing advances in God's kingdom without sacrifice. Ask God to infuse your soul with willingness to risk misunderstanding for His glory.

When was the last time you attempted something for God that genuinely stretched your faith and required real sacrifice? Jabez refused to settle for stale religion. By praying 'bless me indeed,' he placed a blank check on the altar and invited the God of Israel to define and pour out His highest spiritual good.



Praying 'bless me indeed' rejects empty tradition and embraces God's genuine, sorrow-free spiritual enrichment through faith and holy risk.

6. Enlarge My Coast: Kingdom Expansion Through Abiding Union

Jabez's second petition builds directly upon the first: *'and enlarge my coast'*—make me a bigger man! Without a pure heart, asking God for larger borders would become toxic selfishness, fueling pride or greed. Yet when a consecrated believer asks God to expand his territory, he is asking for enlarged spiritual capacity, greater influence for righteousness, and wider opportunities to advance the Kingdom of God. To see how Scripture unpacks this theme, turn to Isaiah 54:1-8, where the Lord addresses a barren, desolate Israel: *'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear... Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.'* In plain terms, God was saying, 'Build an addition onto your house! Expand your borders, because supernatural fruitfulness is coming!'

How can someone who feels spiritually barren, inadequate, or small suddenly experience abundant fruitfulness? Isaiah 54:5 gives the astonishing answer: *'For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name.'* Fruitfulness never originates in human cleverness; it flows from covenant union with Almighty God.

Jesus Christ echoed that identical truth in John 15:1-8 when He taught His disciples about the Vine and the branches. A branch cannot manufacture grapes by straining harder; its one vital responsibility is to stay cleanly connected and abiding in the Vine. The Apostle Paul called this the glorious mystery of the gospel in Colossians 1:27: *'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'* When Jesus truly dwells within a surrendered, Spirit-filled heart, spiritual fruitfulness and expanded influence become inevitable.

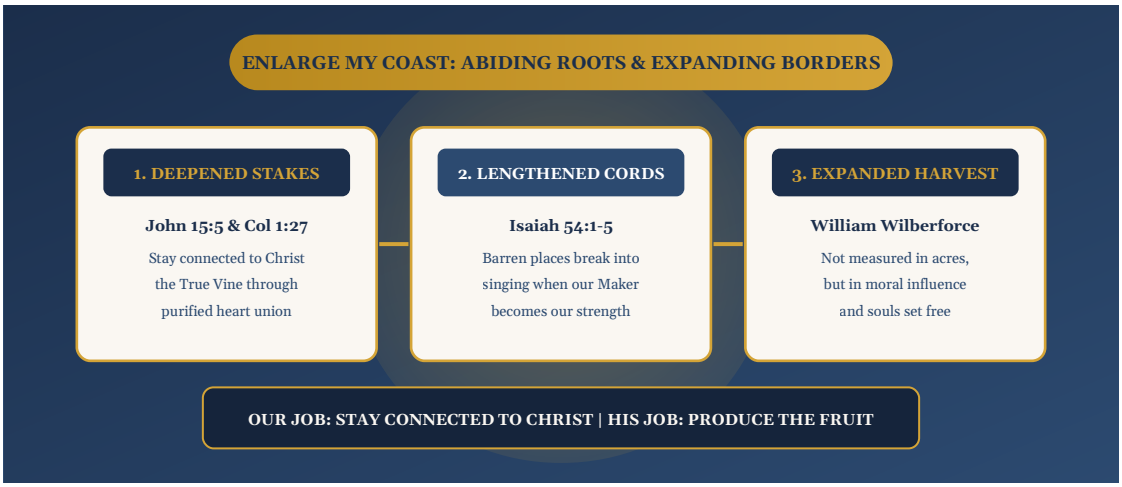
William Wilberforce: Expanded Territory in Public Life

Consider how God answered this kind of prayer in the life of William Wilberforce. Entering the British Parliament in 1780 as a young man with a bright political future, Wilberforce experienced a profound conversion to Christ and immediately wrestled over whether to abandon politics to become a preacher. Most well-meaning Christians today might automatically advise leaving public life for pulpit ministry, yet God placed a crucial mentor in his ear: John Newton, the former slave-ship captain turned pastor and hymn writer of *Amazing Grace*. Newton urged Wilberforce to remain in Parliament where God had stationed him.

- **Steadfast Perseverance Against Wickedness:** Obeying that call, Wilberforce launched a decades-long battle against the horrific, entrenched British slave trade.
- **Enduring Ridicule and Defeat:** His righteous bills were mocked, opposed by wealthy interests, and voted down repeatedly for years without discouraging his obedience.
- **God-Given Enlargement:** In time, God stretched Wilberforce's tent cords across the entire British Empire and around the globe. His expanded 'coast' was measured not in personal real estate, but in broken chains, rescued souls, and national reformation.

Holiness Doctrine: Heart Purity Prepares Us for Expanded Territory

In Wesleyan-Arminian conservative holiness theology, there is a sacred order between cleansing and expansion. Just as Isaiah 54 commands us to 'strengthen thy stakes' while 'lengthening thy cords,' we cannot safely carry wider spiritual influence without deeper roots of heart holiness. In entire sanctification, the Holy Spirit cleanses the believer's heart from inbred selfishness, carnal pride, and double-mindedness through faith and full consecration. Only a purified, Christ-centered heart can handle enlarged borders without stealing God's glory.



Kingdom enlargement flows outward from abiding union with Christ—strengthening our roots in holiness so God can stretch our influence for good.

7. Thine Hand With Me: Holy Boldness in God's Strength

If God enlarges our territory, we immediately realize our utter inadequacy to manage it alone. That is why Jabez immediately prayed thirdly: *'and that thine hand might be with me!'* Make me a bolder man! One conference speaker rightly

warned: 'If you alone can accomplish what you believe God has called you to do, your vision is either too small or it is not from God.' You plus God always constitute an unstoppable majority. We love quoting Romans 8:31—*'If God be for us, who can be against us?'*—yet we must beware of twisting it selfishly as though God exists as a mascot cheering for our personal agenda. Instead, flip the script: Are we fully on *His* side? Jesus Christ is actively building His church and advancing His kingdom tonight. When our lives align completely with His mission, everything we do—whether eating, drinking, studying, or working—becomes an act done strictly for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

History shines with examples of ordinary believers whose borders expanded because God's mighty hand rested upon them. Look at the memorial inscription honoring pioneer missionary John Geddie on the island of Aneityum in the New Hebrides: *'When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here; and when he left in 1872, there were no heathen.'* Think of Zerubbabel in the Old Testament, trembling before the monumental task of rebuilding Jerusalem's ruined temple. God sent the prophet Zechariah with an unforgettable promise in Zechariah 4:6: *'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.'* Human muscle and clever strategy always run dry, but the Spirit-anointed hand of God completes the impossible.

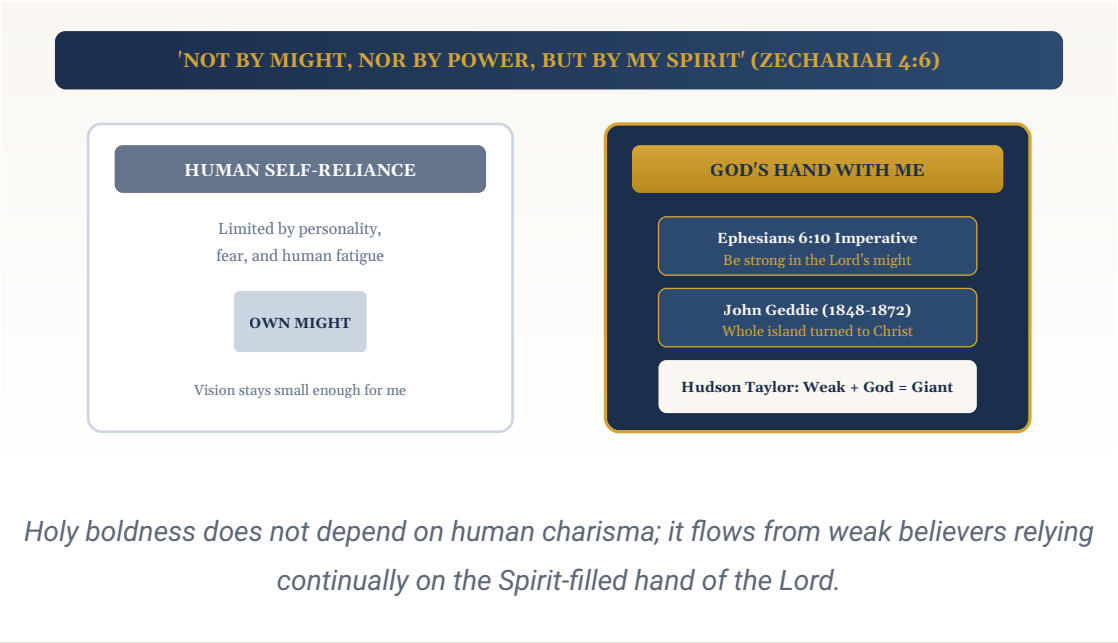
God′s Giants Are Weak People Relying on Him

- **Commanded Strength (Ephesians 6:10):** Paul does not write, 'Wish you were strong' or 'Maybe someday you will feel strong.' In Greek, *'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might'* is a present-tense imperative—a continuous command to draw strength from Another right when you feel weakest.
- **Hudson Taylor's Secret:** When a friend praised the sweeping impact of the China Inland Mission, Hudson Taylor humbly replied, 'It seemed to me that God looked over the whole world to find a man who was weak enough to do His work; and when at last He found me, He said, He's weak enough, he'll do.'

- **The Common Denominator:** Taylor added a sentence every young believer should memorize: 'All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on Him being with them.'

In Plain English: Holy Boldness for Quiet or Insecure Teenagers

Do not ever confuse holy boldness with having a loud, outgoing personality! You may feel shy in class, nervous when speaking up around friends, or overwhelmed by how weak you feel spiritually. That actually puts you in the exact position God loves to use. Holy boldness is not swaggering self-confidence; it is quiet, Spirit-filled confidence that the Almighty hand of Jesus is holding yours as you stand for purity, invite a friend to church, or speak truth with love.



Holy boldness does not depend on human charisma; it flows from weak believers relying continually on the Spirit-filled hand of the Lord.

8. Keep Me From Evil: Breaking Generational Cycles of Pain

The fourth petition of Jabez's prayer guards everything that went before it: *'and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me!'* Make me a better man! Here we uncover another remarkable Hebrew wordplay. The phrase translated 'that it might not grieve me' springs from the exact same Hebrew root (*otseb*) as Jabez's own name! Notice how the New King James Version renders the end of that clause: 'that I may not cause pain.' Both nuances fit hand in glove. Jabez knew firsthand how deeply his mother's sorrow had marked him, and he desperately wanted God to break that cycle so he would neither be crushed by evil nor pass his own hurts onto his family, neighbors, and spiritual children.

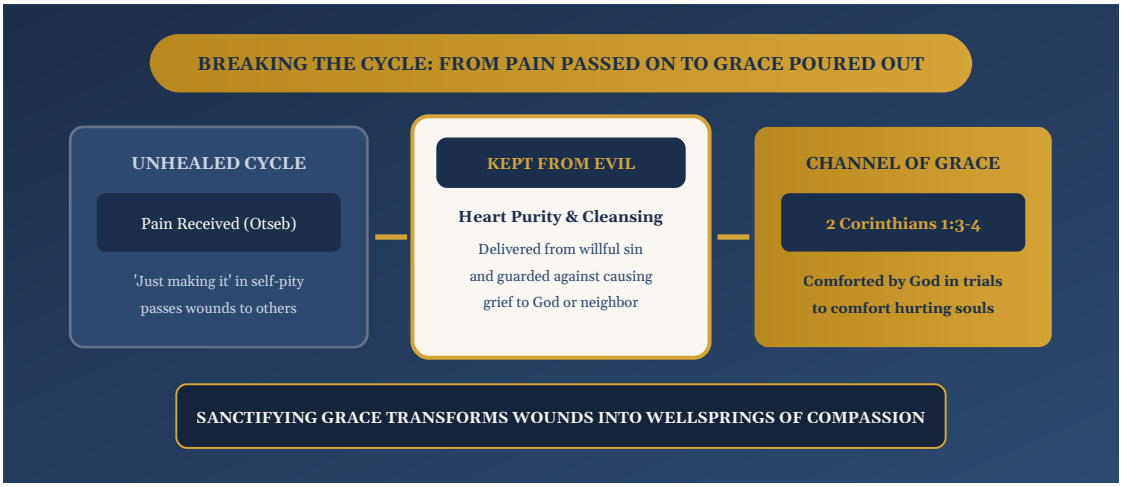
Too many Christians settle for what we might call 'just-making-it' religion. When asked how they are walking with God, they sigh, 'Well, I'm hanging on by my fingernails.' Certainly we must never put on a plastic smile and pretend everything is painless when real trials strike. Yet God never saved us merely to survive spiritual defeat while leaking bitterness onto everyone around us! If we only stay at the survival level of chronic discouragement, we inevitably pass along our pain rather than Christ's grace. God longs to lift our spiritual storyline so that our trials become pipelines of redemptive mercy to a hurting world.

> **Wesleyan-Arminian Holiness: Victory Over Willful Sin and Cleansing of Heart**
> When Jabez prayed, 'Keep me from evil,' he demonstrated the authentic holiness passion taught by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer: 'Deliver us from evil.' Conservative holiness theology rejects the defeated notion that believers must keep sinning in thought, word, and deed every day until death. By God's justifying grace we are pardoned and given power to cease from willful sin, and through the second definite work of **entire sanctification**, the Holy Spirit purges away inbred sin, carnal touchiness, and bitterness. Only a pure, Spirit-filled heart can consistently break generational cycles of pain and respond to wounds with Christlike love.

From Receiving Comfort to Becoming a Channel

Turn to 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 to see God's purposeful design behind every comfort He pours into your soul: *'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.'*

- **God Does Not Comfort Us Merely for Ourselves:** Every tear Jesus dries and every grace He supplies in your dark valley equips you to recognize and rescue someone else walking that same valley tomorrow.
- **Guarding Against Moral Compromise:** As God blesses and enlarges your influence, Satan aims fiercer temptations at your integrity. Praying 'keep me from evil' keeps a tender conscience dependent on the Holy Spirit's daily guard.
- **Stopping the Pain With You:** By God's sanctifying grace, you can declare in Jesus' name: 'The bitterness, anger, or brokenness that wounded my childhood stops right here with me; from my life forward, others will receive grace!'



Praying to be kept from evil breaks the cycle of passing pain onto others, transforming a believer into a vessel of God's comfort.

9. The Prosperity and Permanence of Jabez: Leaving a City of Scribes

First Chronicles 4:10 concludes with seven triumphant words: *'And God granted him that which he requested.'* Here stands the true prosperity of Jabez! Biblical success has nothing to do with manipulative schemes, greedy accumulation, or human applause; true prosperity is simply 'God did it.' Kingdom visions that are birthed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit are unfolded by God's providence, powered by His Spirit, supplied by His faithfulness, and lived out through our daily obedience. God delights to say yes when His surrendered children pray according to His heart for genuine blessing, holy influence, divine companionship, and deliverance from evil.

Yet the full scope of God's answer does not even end in chapter four! Turn back two chapters to 1 Chronicles 2:55, where we discover a quiet yet breathtaking clue about the permanence of Jabez's legacy: *'And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.'* Wait—look at that line: **the families of the scribes dwelt at Jabez!**

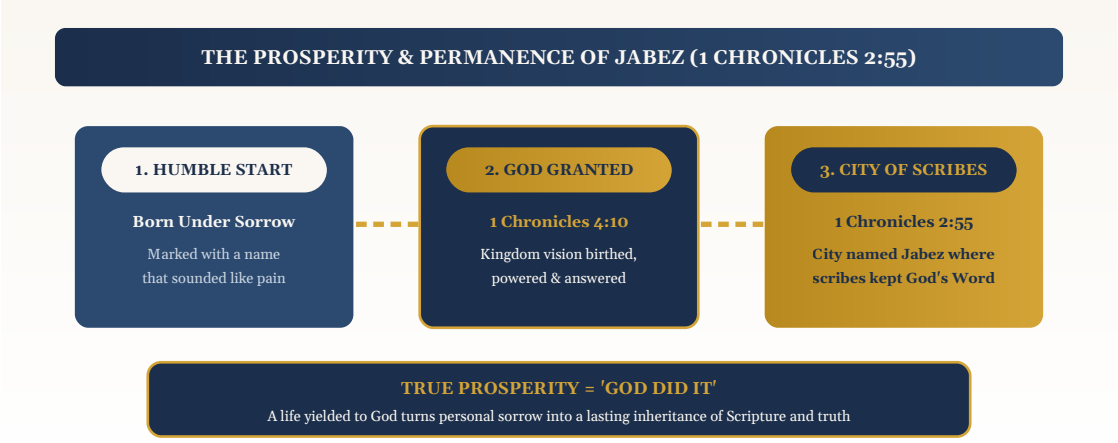
Scriptural Heritage: Ezra the Scribe and the City Named Jabez

Bible scholars recognize that the Books of Chronicles were compiled under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by Ezra the Scribe following Israel's return from Babylonian captivity. In that post-exilic era, Israel had no reigning king on David's throne; the chief spiritual and intellectual leaders guiding the nation were the scribes—the diligent copyists, teachers, and preservers of Holy Scripture. Apparently, Jabez lived such a godly, honorable, and transformative life in his generation that Israel refused to let his memory perish. They named an entire city 'Jabez' and populated it with families of scribes devoted to preserving God's Word!

Pause and marvel at the irony of divine grace! A boy whose mother named him 'Pain' out of deep personal grief lived so closely with the God of Israel that his name became immortalized—not as a synonym for misery, but as a sacred hub where scribes studied, copied, and taught the Scriptures to future generations. What began in tears ended in an enduring city of truth.

Life Orientation	Driving Motivation	Ultimate Spiritual Legacy
Pain-Driven Living	Rehearsing past wounds, bitterness, and inherited labels.	Stuck in spiritual defeat; spreads sorrow to family and peers.
Comfort-Driven Religion	Seeking an easy path, surface blessings, and empty tradition.	Shallow roots; collapses under testing and leaves no lasting fruit.
Jabez-Style Holiness Living	Surrendered faith seeking God's blessing, Spirit-power, and purity.	Honorable character today and a lasting legacy of Scripture and grace.

Young people, consider what kind of 'city' your life is building. You may never have a town named after you on a map, yet through consistent holiness, humble prayer, and love for God's Word, your faithfulness can become a spiritual refuge where younger brothers, sisters, classmates, and future generations discover the living truth of Jesus Christ.



God answered Jabez's prayer so enduringly that post-exilic scribes preserved Scripture in a city bearing his very name.

10. Three Critical Takeaways and the Spirit of Bold Intercession

As we bring the study of Jabez home to our hearts, three crucial takeaways stand out like beacons for every believer—young or old—seeking a deeper, holier walk with Christ:

1. Beginnings Never Lock Endings

We had little control over how we entered this world, yet by God's grace we have everything to do with how we finish through faith and obedience.

2. Every Soul Matters to God

There are no forgotten 'what's-his-names' in Heaven. God's only favorites—if we may call them that—are humble souls who turn wholeheartedly to Him.

3. Boldness Brings Blessing

Scripture repeatedly reveals how God delights to honor specific, courageous, persistent prayer rooted in His promises and aimed at His glory.

Five Biblical Witnesses to Holy Boldness

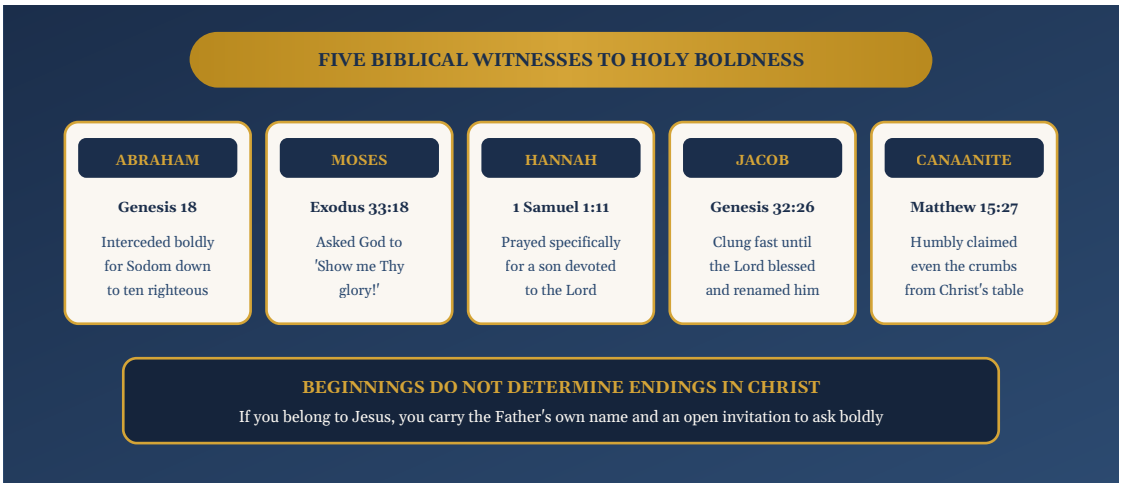
Observe how consistent this pattern of godly courage runs from Genesis to the Gospels. Whenever ordinary men and women refused to settle for fainthearted survival and pressed into God's presence with holy boldness, Heaven responded powerfully:

- **Abraham (Genesis 18:22-33):** Standing before the Lord on behalf of wicked Sodom, Abraham boldly interceded step by step—from fifty righteous down to ten—and God affirmed every single intercession Abraham dared to voice.
- **Moses (Exodus 32:32; 33:18):** Not only did Moses intercede so fiercely for rebellious Israel that he offered to be blotted out in their place, but right after God promised His presence, Moses asked one audacious step further: *'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory!'*
- **Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11):** Brokenhearted and barren, Hannah could have merely begged for any child at all. Instead, she prayed with specific, consecrated boldness: 'Lord, give me a man child, and I will give him back to Thee all his days!'

- **Jacob (Genesis 32:26):** Clinging desperately through the night at Peniel, Jacob refused to release his grip until Heaven's blessing sealed his transformed heart: *'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'*
- **The Canaanite Woman (Matthew 15:21-28):** When Jesus tested her faith by reminding her of Israel's priority, she answered with astonishing humility and grit: *'Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.'* Jesus marveled at her great faith and healed her daughter that very hour.

In Plain English: Moving From Survival to Thriving Holiness

Stop praying timid, vague prayers that merely ask God to help you survive another school week or limp through spiritual dryness. Like Jabez, bring your real hurts, your real weaknesses, and your boldest holy desires straight to the Father's throne! Ask Him to cleanse your heart entirely from sin, show you His clear calling for your life, strengthen your relationships in holiness, and write His own new name of grace across your heart. Remember: if you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, you bear the family name of the King of kings!



Across all of Scripture, God consistently delights to reward humble, persistent, and courageous intercession with extraordinary blessing.

11. Small Group & Personal Reflection

1. **Beyond the Surface of Genealogies:** Why do you think the Holy Spirit placed Jabez's story inside nine chapters of genealogies in First Chronicles, and how does Acts 10:34 encourage a young person or adult who feels overlooked like a 'what's-his-name'?
2. **Labels Versus Identity in Christ:** What painful labels or past failures have you been tempted to wear like Jabez's name, and what difference does it make to realize that God works redemptively over our thorns to build Christlike character rather than merely making life comfortable?
3. **Real Blessing Versus Hollow Tradition:** In your own words, what is the difference between wanting God to 'bless me indeed' (Proverbs 10:22) and relying on comfortable 'Bible Belt' traditions or wanting a trouble-free life?
4. **Abiding Before Expanding:** Looking at Isaiah 54:1-5, John 15:5, and the example of William Wilberforce, why must deep heart purity and daily abiding in Christ come before praying 'enlarge my coast'?
5. **Stopping the Cycle of Pain:** How does the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work (and 2 Corinthians 1:3-4) empower us to break generational or relational cycles so we pass along grace instead of passing along our own hurts?
6. **Specific Holy Boldness:** Reviewing the bold prayers of Abraham, Moses, Hannah, Jacob, and the Canaanite woman, what specific area of your spiritual life, family, or witness is God inviting you to stop merely 'surviving' in and begin praying about with humble, bold faith?

Closing Prayer Focus: *Heavenly Father, we thank You for the faithful testimony of Jabez, a man who refused to stay trapped in past pain and instead turned his sorrow into a pathway of blessing, honor, and lasting truth. Lord Jesus, search our hearts today, cleanse us completely by Your sanctifying grace from every carnal label and selfish bent, and redefine us by Your own holy name. Grant us genuine spiritual blessing, enlarge our borders for Your Kingdom's sake, keep Your mighty hand upon our weakness, and guard us from every evil so our lives become channels of comfort rather than instruments of pain. We trust Your unfailing wisdom to work all things together for our holiness and Your glory, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.*

Full Original Sermon Message Transcript + EXPAND FULL TEXT

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. If you are... I'm glad you have your Bibles open. Although the scripture is, the main scripture is on your papers there. First Chronicles chapter four. First Chronicles chapter four. I will highlight that there is some work that's going on over in the haven tonight. And we could use some assistance from some ladies getting that extra cleaned up. Sister Kelsey takes care of cleaning that up, but it is especially bad right now.

So if there is anybody maybe tomorrow night or during the day over the next couple days, if there is someone see me after service and we'd be glad for your extra assistance. First Chronicles chapter four verses nine and ten. The lesson is focused today on the character of Jbez, who maybe became especially popular over our lifetimes through the book, The Prayer of Jbez. David Wilkinson. I'm sorry, Bruce Wilkinson, not David. I was thinking David Wilkinson. It was Bruce Wilkinson.

I think it came out in 2000. How many of you have read that book? Okay, so I can't read it. It became, they expected, when it came out, he had written it, he had preached that message for quite a while. He wrote the book and they were going to give it out, I think, a special prayer breakfast that he was speaking of. Maybe a national prayer breakfast. They expected, maybe sell, there's some ring there, but Scott, you're probably working on it. Thank you. They were expecting, I think, around 30,000 copies or hand them out or whatever, and that ended up being like 9.7 million copies or something like that, eventually.

So it became a very popular book, and I think it was a book of value and benefit. That's with any book or work of man, you know, there might have been some certain elements that were emphasized. But I don't want us to miss these blessed verses, all right? So first Chronicles 4, verses 9 and 10. I want to note, this is in the middle of genealogies. How many here, when you get in your regular Bible reading, when you get to genealogies, you get extra excited. You may hear Kim. Kim.

A few times. Well, praise the Lord. Good. Right. All right. So Kim and Rita, the rest of us, the Lord's going to help us. Okay. There's these ladies who are living at high planes. Okay. Most of the rest of us, we get the genealogies, we're a little disappointed. Okay. Now, don't misunderstand. I very much think I might know some of the reasons, Kim. Kim, let me speak for yourself, Kim. You just like going to the... I watch Kim. Well, you know, some of them are too large, and believe it, they lean back to Jesus.

Hey, man. The fact's gone. They're very far above. Mm-hmm. I really expect you to act cool. Good. So... The truth is genealogies are critically important. I was with Brother Mitch on Monday at the county's office, what do they call the office there, Mitch? Clerk of court. So we went in this room that immediately when you went in there, it smelled like old paper. And on the shelves of that county office are all these big binder books.

And you go, and you can... Some of them you can slide out on these little slider things.

Some of them were beautifully bound big books. Some were just pretty plain. I will tell you that if I just had my choice of reading, Mitch and I pulled one out, like open it up. I mean, handwritten stuff from the 18, whatever. I'm just going to tell you, I'm going to be honest, it was not exciting reading. I don't mean there's nothing exciting in there, Brother Rick. Okay, but I'm saying it's not... In general, it's not exciting reading. I'm going to be reading something else if it's just up to me.

But I will tell you this. I am really glad they're there. Because they serve an incredible purpose to the county, to people whose ancestors lived here, or transactions that were done to serve an incredible purpose. And that's what happens with biblical genealogies. It's serving an incredible purpose. Now, every once in a while, we get a golden nugget. All right, we get a golden nugget, and here's one of them. All right, let's read. 1st Chronicles 4, 9, 10, out loud together. Here we go.

And Jbezz was more honorable than his brethren and his mother called his name Jbezz saying, because I bear him with sorrow. And Jbezz called on the God of Israel saying, old thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me, and God granted him that which he requested. And I want to emphasize there, God granted what he what? God granted what he requested. I think sometimes why we don't get God to grant is because we haven't requested.

About the time the Americans put the first man on the moon, there was a cartoon in one of the newspapers. It depicted two astronauts who had been together just the two of them. Okay? I understand that. There's two people. Astronauts had been together for months and months in the space capsule. They had finally arrived at their destination. And the

picture on the cartoon showed the spacecraft with a door open, the steps lowered, and the two astronauts descending on to the surface of Mars.

Captain dominated the picture. His co-pilot could be just seen peering over his shoulder. The captain was holding a mic broadcasting back to Earth. This is William P. Throgmorton. Broadcasting to you from the surface of Mars. What's his name? And I have just made it. I'm very thankful. There are no what's his names with God. Scripture says that this way, God is no respecter of persons. God has no favorites. There's no no names with God. And maybe just, maybe in part to remind us of that, we have this insert, this emphasis right here in the Chronicles of a man who, yes, stood out in his generation, but every name, every storyline, every person matters.

And I trust that is a word of life of grace to you tonight. Okay, because you matter. Your storyline, your burdens, your battles, your brokenness, your blessedness, it all matters. And I thank God for that today. Praise the Lord. We're going to dive right in because we are running behind on time. I want to note, or at least partially to that reason, I want to note, I want to note number one, the problem of J-Bez, the problem of J-Bez. If I were to raise hands tonight, or ask you to raise your hand, I think all of us would raise our hands that we know something about problems.

Some of you would say, I'm an expert at problems. J-Bez had a problem. And the first problem I want to note was his mother. His mother. One of J-Bez's problems was his mom. Now, I'm not saying she wasn't a good woman. She very possibly, maybe very likely was. But she did create a problem in his life. She did create a problem. Now, there are multiple mothers who have created some problems for their children. There's some biblical examples of that. Rebecca, in the scripture, well, let me share this with you first.

In the days of the Prophet Samuel, another mother faced overwhelming grief. As she was dying in childbirth, as the situation around them was

unbelievably bleak for the people of God, she passed it on to her son. And she named her son, Ichabod. I don't want you to pause and think about that. It's one thing to say Ichabod over a group of people or a nation. But imagine branding or marking your son with that name. And in many ways, in the Old Testament, a name had a prophetic emphasis upon the life.

I think it still can. But it had a prophetic emphasis upon the life. And imagine that. It's one thing for her to say Ichabod. It's another thing for her to label her son Ichabod. The nation suffered military defeat. The Ark of the Covenant had been captured. Her husband and father-in-law had died. Her son's name became immoral to a national tragedy. Every mother leaves a legacy to her children. Some leave encouragement. Some faith. Some. Many times unintentionally pass along wounds from their own struggles.

J.B.'s mother did not name him blessing. Hope. Victory. Possibility. No, she named him. According to the pain that she felt surrounding his birth. Now, we're not going to spend time speculating on what it was. You may have your idea. I may have my idea. Actually, I'm kind of thankful we don't know. Because we have a way as humans, as once we know something, then that defines the parameters of how things can apply. I'm thankful that I don't know what Paul's torn to the flesh was.

I am. There's much speculation. I have my idea as you may have yours. But we don't actually know. And I'm thankful we don't know. Because it has proved to be an application point by the Holy Spirit upon probably millions of lives who have struggled through something heavy, deep, painful, difficult. So, the truth is, she named him according to the pain she felt. We can sympathize with her because people often label others through the lens of their own hurts. Probably you've done this.

Probably I've done it. I try not to anymore. But have you ever told someone, oh, I totally understand. I would encourage you not to say that. Because you don't totally understand. You're not walking their journey.

You don't have their history. You don't have their upbringing or lack their up. You don't know their battles. It doesn't mean you don't care. It doesn't mean you don't partially understand. But none of us can totally understand the journey of another. You can't fully understand my vice versa.

This isn't about any one person or any one battle or difficulty. This is the reality of it. And Javis' mother must have had some difficult, deep pain that probably none of us could fully relate to. Whatever she's gone through, it's like others can't fully relate to mine or to yours. Sometimes a parent may say something along the lines of you'll never amount to much. No. Thank God probably no parent here has made that mistake. Sometimes a teacher. I played Mike Clyde's testimony to my Bible class today, the one he shared at Menorize.

You heard it at Youth Convention, but it's more powerful and profound at what he shared at Menorize. And one of the things that happened to him at Menorize was that his mother gave as they were young children in a small Christian school, is that I'm sure the intention was good, but essentially the schoolmaster not just spoke over, but treated these two young, rambunctious boys. He treated them as though they were in some way especially evil. They don't misunderstand. They had to send nature.

They needed to be saved. And they needed discipline. I'm confident of that. But he treated them in a way that crushed them and caused a deep dark trajectory, especially to Mike's life. It was set early on by things spoken over and emphasized about them. In awe that God could help us. This isn't about being soft or passive with children, but it is understanding that what we're speaking over in the way we're treating them does matter. It shapes a trajectory. It causes an emphasis.

We see other biblical examples of this. Rebekah's naming of Jacob. I don't know. She probably meant well. I mean, here it is. Esau comes out. Here's his hand. Grounds hold up. Trying to pull Esau back. What should we

name him? How about... He'll grasp her. That sounds like a good name. I mean, that's what he did. I'm sure glad. I've shared before. I'm sure glad. My parents didn't name me in accordance with what was happening around the trauma of my birth. I stayed in the birth canal too long.

And if you think I have a conehead now from what I hear, I really had once a man when I was first born. I'm sure glad my mom didn't say, let's name him conehead. With me. That's right. Okay, different cultures, right? Rebecca named him supplanter, literally the one who grabs under the foot. He'll grasp her. The idea of that was one who pulls others back to press themselves forward. One who pulls others back to press themselves forward. Interesting. She actually did speak a prophetic word over his journey.

Who he was, who became, I should say. Rachel named Benjamin. Rachel named her son Benjamin. Okay, the birth was traumatic. She actually passed away through the process. And you understand that his name was not first Benjamin. It was what? Yeah, Ben Onai. Benoni, or I'm not sure how they pronounced it. But the word, the name meant, here was her name, speaking over her son. Remember, speaking in her own pain, her own sorrow, her own grief. Son of my sorrow, which was she named him.

Intriguingly, it's interesting. This is one of those little back story lines that I don't think we're reading too much in the scripture to say. Jacob got really involved in this. I think of Jim Parsley, because he knew that he had been stuck with a name. All his life. And he, right away, I assume he waited till she passed away, right away, he said, oh no, he's not Benoni. He's Ben... Jamen. Benjamin. He's son of my right hand. He's son of my strength. Who? I'm glad he got that name changed right away, Jeff.

I'm glad, all right? Now, I won't show another one of his problems, was his mother, and that she kind of spoke her pain over her son. But it also was his, I'm gonna say it this way, his moniker, okay, his nickname, his alias, all right? I teach her once asked her students to write on a name tag, one

word that described how they saw themselves. Some wrote words like athletic, smart, creative, but one student quietly wrote... failure. Another one wrote... unwanted. Another, not enough.

Throughout life, many people carry invisible labels. In this sanctuary tonight, people are carrying labels. Painful childhood, broken relationships, poor decisions, family reputations, past mistakes, they can become names and often become names that people wear quietly day in and day out. Jbez understood what it was like to live with a label. In fact, every time his name was said, I would just think about this for a moment, okay, it was a plan word, it made it rhyme with a Hebrew word.

But essentially, every time his name was said, it was pain. Pain, how you doing? Pain, I hope you had a good day. Pain, how has worked today? Literally, I want you to think about that, because we read Jbez, but the Hebrews heard pain. I don't want you to miss that. They heard pain. Every time his name was spoken. Mom calls him, pain, get in here. Neighbor, hey, pain. It's kind of frustrating this unfinished project you got going on here. You really are pain. Pain, pain, pain.

I want you to pause and hear that. We hear Jbez, they heard pain, sorrow, every single time. Some more notes along this line. Jacob had allowed God to deal with his name in nature. Genesis chapter, I believe it's Genesis chapter 37. I like what God did with Jacob, although it was a painful process, right? Jacob wrestled with God, and ultimately, what was the angel likely Christ Himself? What was the angel after? Help me out, church. What was the angel after? What did the angel want to hear?

Confession. Confession, and what was the confession over? I'm a hillpress, right? Confession was the name. What's your name? Why would Jacob say Jacob? That sounds pretty easy. We know why, because Jacob knew his name was more than a name. There was a description of his practice, of his life, of his character. Have you ever had God ask you your name? If you've gone very deep with God, you have. Son or daughter, can I

show you the self-bent of your heart? Can I show you how much you're focused on you?

Can I show you the idol of your heart? That's what was going on there. And eventually, things got desperate enough where he finally said, hi, my heel-grasper, I have spent my life tricking other people so I could get ahead. Oh, he had time, and I'm confident Scripture doesn't record all the times. It just gives us some highlight moments. It's the way he had spent his life. It's something very glorious with him. He changed his name. Isra El. God, the one who wrestles with God.

Hang on. And one. You know how he wrestled with God. He won the wrestling match with God by surrendering, by admitting, by humbling. Nothing's changed. God gives grace to the Humble. He gives grace to the Humble. He resists the proud, but he gives grace to the Humble. So God had changed Jacob's name. Interestingly, Jacob dealt with Benjamin's situation, which we just talked about that. J. Bes refused to let his name, or what represented his past, define his character or his future.

Interestingly, his name wasn't changed. God didn't speak over J. Bes. All right, from now on, your name is going to be Moses. No, he didn't do that. Don't raise your hand. But has anybody here ever wished God would change something in your life? You wish you would change the circumstance? You wish he would change that person? You wish he would change something about you? Physical, emotional? Again, if I ask for a show of hands, I dare say most of us, maybe all of us would raise our hands and yell.

I do. I wish God would change that. Now I have good news. The reality is sometimes Jeff God does change circumstances. He did for Jacob, he changed his name to Israel. But you know that many times, God chooses rather than change the circumstance, the detail, the issue, God chooses to work, redemptively, over that. That's what happened in 2nd Corinthians

chapter 12, when Paul said, Lord, I can serve you the best. I can really make advancements with your kingdom if you get rid of this thorn.

I think that's how his prayer went, though, Justin, thinking what's something like that. Lord, this thorn is hindering me from being all I could be for you. And the Lord says, actually, Paul, I have a different angle on this. This thorn is keeping you on your face before me. And it's actually making you far more useful to me than you would be without it. That's a different angle, isn't it? Church, I remind us. Let's stop asking God why these bad things are happening. Let's submit and surrender to the always one who may be allowing things to come into our journey.

I know sometimes it's because of people's sins, our own or others. I understand that. Many times it's things that we can't just point. Well, this is what's wrong. This is why it happened. But God and His wisdom and His providence knows because God is way more interested in your character reflecting Jesus than He is you and me living a comfortable life. He's way more concerned with that. He loves me enough for the Jeff to make my life uncomfortable if needed to make me more like Jesus.

He loves you enough, too, to allow some discomfort and sometimes some perpetual lifelong thorns if it drives you to Him and allows your character to more properly, wholly reflect His Son. Church, if you miss that, you will miss some critically maturing truth in your life, critically maturing truth. Somehow, it seems like too often, we have unhealthy, unbiblical theologies. It's somehow God's here to make my life comfortable. Nonsense. My comfort is way down in His priori level.

My character is way up on His priori level. Amen. Well, praise the Lord. Keep going. Number two, the prayer of James, the prayer of James. This prayer was make me a blessed man. Blessed indeed is the quality of the blessing. Indeed, seems to be originally, at least in our English term, originally in middle English, originally as two words. Indeed, or probably meant, don't just bless me in word, but bless me in fact, in reality. Anybody

here? You're not so big on words. There's Brother Joseph Smith's sister, Mary Ann.

Now, she talks a lot. Don't misunderstand. I'd say this, she's right here. But she's not much of a word person. She likes action. And so, every time I see her, almost every time, I just did it while I was in Shelbyville a couple of weeks ago, I said, I said to her, I said, Mary Ann, I am not even going to say that I'm glad to see you. It's kind of our joke, you know. I'm not even going to say it. Okay, she's once action. And that's essentially what I think, James is praying here, Lord.

I'm not asking for that as just theoretical, a nice comment, but I want this to be reality in my life. I want this to be the real thing, real blessing, real blessing. See, he wasn't interested in something. He just appeared to be a blessing, but that was just a true spiritual eternal enduring blessing. I love Proverbs 10 verse 22. The blessing of the Lord, church, this is a good verse to know, to have memorized. The blessing of the Lord, it makes it rich. And he added, no sorrow with it.

In the late 1700s, William Kerry was apporting the shoemaker with little education to you opportunities, at least by society standards. Most people would have never expected William Kerry to influence the world. Yet, William became convinced that God wanted the gospel taken to the nations. Now, you and I would take that for granted. Okay, we would just have that. Oh, yeah, of course. Not so much in his context. In fact, while he proposed sending missionaries overseas, some church leaders thought his vision was unrealistic.

In fact, one minister reportedly told him, young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid or mine. Now, that is utter nonsense. But it was a pervasive false theology of his context. By the way, don't you think that false theology cannot be in the hearts of minds of people in haven arrest by the church? Don't you think that? Of course it can't be. That's why we've got to get aligned with

Scripture. Because some things you were taught, maybe even by somebody right here years ago, is not necessarily accurate, at least not fully accurate.

I want you to hear me church. You and I need to dig in the Word with an open ear to the Holy Spirit, willingness to be taught of the Lord to be taught of those who have gone deep with God. One of the things I've heard, this is the most Bible belt I've ever lived. Somebody said, somebody said this is the buckle of the buckle. I don't know. There are other areas that might be the buckle, but you catch what I'm saying. One of the dangers of living in this area, I would say one of the dangers sometimes in growing up in a church, like some of you have, is that you can grow comfortable with things because that's the way you were taught.

And that's the way I was taught will never stand up when we stand before the Lord. What is actually correct? I thank God for a rich heritage right here. God wants to make sure that we're aligned with His Word and the reality is, I say it's a very rare situation that the Holy Spirit doesn't have to un-teach us than things that He might properly teach them to us as we walk with Him. I really believe that. Well, but William Kerry believed God was bigger than the limitations that people around him were trying to put.

And so he adopted a model that became very famous. In fact, I hope most of you could quote it with me. I'll read it and then you quote it. Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God. One more time. Expect great things from God. Attempt great things. For God. Hang on. What's the last great thing you attempted for God? No, no, don't tell me. No, don't say something out loud. What's the last great thing that caused you risk sacrifice? Potential misunderstanding of others.

William Kerry laid it on the line. He didn't speak this as a nice Christian cliche. He banked his very life on it. One of the things I'm more convinced than ever one of God's wanting to infuse in his people in this generation is

a tolerance for holy risk. Nothing advanced. You heard me preach this anymore. Nothing advances without some measure risk. Amen. Well, keep going. There's a song that came out. I don't know how long ago. I'm familiar with it. It's entitled Blessings. We pray for blessing.

We pray for peace. Comfort for my family. Protection while we sleep. We pray for healing. For prosperity. We pray for your mighty hand to ease our suffering. We pray for wisdom. Your voice to hear. We cry in anger. We cannot feel you near. We doubt your goodness. We doubt your love as if every promise from your word is not enough. And the course goes on to say, because what if your blessings come through raindrops? What if your healing comes through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know your near?

I'm just theoretical, but I mean really know it. What if trials of this life are your mercies in disguise? How many times have we prayed for this? But God loved us too much to let our prayers stay here. I say glory be to God. Well his prayer included make me a bigger man. A bigger man in a large my coast. You're welcome to turn Isaiah 54, one through eight. Let me just highlight it quickly. Isaiah 54, one through eight. Isaiah 54, God is speaking over his people. Isaiah 54 verse one says, Sing O Baron.

Notice that word. That was a person word over a Hebrew woman. Sing O Baron, that's his not bare. Break forth into singing cry aloud. That's just not to avail a child. For more are the children of the desolate. And the children of the married wife say, the Lord, what a glorious promise. Possibility God was speaking over his people. The one who has no husband in essence, she's going to be more fruitful than the married wife, married woman. Well, of course he was speaking in a spiritual sense, a national sense over them, but especially a new covenant terminology in a spiritual sense, verse two, enlarge the place of thy tent.

Let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations. Or could we say this way? Add an addition to your house. Buy more property. enlarge the

borders. Blessing is a coming. Verse five, verse five, for thy maker is what? Then husband. Well, God is thy husband. Well, if God's thy husband, then maybe fruitful is possible over a Baron situation. Not maybe, it is. Because Jesus would teach us in the New Testament context, how are we fruitful as we are connected to an abiding in the bind?

Fruitfulness has little to do with you, my friend, and much to do with him in you. Our job, please hear this church, our job is stay connected. In essence, the rest is him. Stay connected. Do what it takes to stay connected. Because if he dwells in you, he's the great mystery of the gospel, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Well, I say, hallelujah. Oh, I got to keep moving. When William Wilberforce entered the brace parlor in 1780, he was a young politician with a promising career ahead of him.

After his conversion to Christ, he wrestled with whether he should leave public life and enter the ministry. Probably most of us would have counseled him. Yeah. Move from being a politician to a preacher. That's a no-brainer. Wouldn't we tell most people that we're living? I think I usually would. But he had a voice, a critical voice in his ear at this season, at this juncture. You may have heard them. John Newton. John Newton, the former slave trader, turned pastor and him writer.

He encouraged William Wilberforce to remain in politics where God had placed him. William Wilberforce, true to the calling of God upon his life, began a decades, I believe, long fight against a British slave trade. It's hard to comprehend the things that they were fighting. It's like a surreal idea to us. But it's wicked, wretched, debauched, horrific to the unbelievable degree. His efforts were opposed, ridiculed, and repeatedly defeated. But William Wilberforce persevered, and over time, God began to enlarge his borders.

God began to enlarge his influence beyond what he could have imagined. What began as one man's concern became a movement that literally transformed the nation. His influence extended from parliament to the

British Empire and eventually impacted much of the world. Wilberforce's territory was not measured in acres of land, but an expanded opportunity, responsibility, and influence. I don't know if he ever prayed the prayer of J. Bezz, but God made this prayer a reality in his life mission.

See, make me a boulder, man, make me a boulder, man. I was at a leadership conference a few years back, and one of the speakers said this, if you can accomplish what you believe God has called you to do, or if you alone can accomplish what God, you believe God has called you to do. The vision is either too small, or it's not from God. Take heart, church. You, plus God, is a majority. Romans 8 says this way, if God be for us, who can be against us. Now, hang on. Too many times, I think we define that in a somewhat self-centered way.

Hey, God's on my side. Let me flip the script. But I think it's more important to understand that we're on his side. And if I'm on his side, but much, his will's advancements. Because the New Testament tells us that Jesus is building his church. And he is advancing his kingdom tonight. That's not maybe, he is. And if I'm on his side, why wouldn't I lean in with all of my heart to partner with him in advancing his kingdom and building his church? Make me a bolder man. I've got to put something in my spirit that understands what you're about and is willing to partner with you in this and take more ground and do, accomplish more things for your glory, for your honor, to where everything I do can truly be described as I'm doing it for the glory of God.

Eat, drink, whatever. I'm doing it for the glory of God. Well, I say, Hallelujah. It was said of Rijonggeti. When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians. But when he left in 1872, there were no heathen. At the particular island that he was called to minister at New Hebrides Island. When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians. When he left in 1872, there were no heathen. Church. God's asking us to do something in holy boldness for his glory and honor. Amen. Hallelujah.

Okay. Got to wrap things up. By the way, by the way, the boldness is not about your personality. By the way, it's also not limited to your personality. In other words, if you're shy by nature, that doesn't mean you can't have a holy boldness infused by God in your life. Zerubbable is struggling in his day at seams. And the prophet Zachariah spoke over him. He said, I have a word for Zerubbable. He is going to complete this temple. But it's not by might. It's not by power. It's by my spirit.

Zerubbable, you are. You're going to boldly complete the temple in your day, in your generation. But it's going to be my power in you. If he's a 6-10, I don't know. It's right up there in some of my top verses. If he's a 6-10, be strong in the Lord. Don't raise your hand. How many feel strong tonight? Maybe most of you. I dare say that lots of times we eat anything but feel strong. But we are not given an option. It doesn't say wish you were strong. It doesn't say hope you were strong.

Someday I'll be strong. Present tense imperative. Be strong. How? In the Lord. And the power of his might. Strong in the strength of someone else. Hudson Taylor, that great missionary, founder of China Inland Mission. He was once complemented by a friend on the impact of the mission. And Hudson answered this way, don't miss this. Hudson answered, it seemed to me that God looked over the whole world to find a man who is weak enough to do his work. And when at last he found me, he said, he's weak enough, he'll do.

And then he went on to say, all God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on him being with them. All God's giants have been weak men who found their strength in the understanding that he would be with them. Ah, D, make me a better man, make me a better man. That would have kept me from evil that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested. There does seem to be a play on words here. The idea there that may not grieve me,

that it may not cause me pain or there could be an understanding of this passage.

The New King James has it as that I would not cause pain. But think about it this way. Lord, I want you to make my life. Or it is not defined by my past. Or I want my life to be such, or I am not passing along to other my pain, my struggle, my difficulty, my challenge. But rather I'm passing along grace. Do enough in my life, church, God wants us to do more than just have a level where I'm making it. Have you ever asked somebody and they kind of answered along those lines? Have you ever answered along those lines?

I don't mean we need to be fakes and say, oh, everything's great! When it's terrible. But God does want to lift. He wants to lift our spiritual storyline where it's not always about how bad, how difficult, how challenging, how painful. Because if it only goes that far church, we're passing along our pain. God wants us to move to a place where we can pass along what second Corinthians chapter one tells us. Did you know one of the reasons God brings comfort and grace into your life?

Second Corinthians chapter one says, blessed be the God of all comfort, who comforts us in, listen, take heart in all our tribulations. But he does not stop there. That'd be wonderful. And that is wonderful, by the way. Some of you really know what that's about. But he says, that you might comfort others with the comfort that you have received. I'm paraphrasing that you have received. The God of all comfort doesn't come for you just to help you. He comforts us that we might be a channel of his comfort to others.

All right, let's close with this. The prosperity of Jebes. God did it. That's the true definition of success and blessing. Kingdom visions, God bursts in our hearts. They're from Him unfolded by Him and powered and provided by Him and lived out by us through His Spirit. And last one, the permanence of Jebes. The next, later in the Book of Chronicles, we have

this verse. And the families of the scribes, the little Jebes, the tierithites, the chimithites, the sukathites. These are the kinites that came out of Him, the father of the house of Rickah.

The families of the scribes are jelt at where? At Jebes. No, we don't know this for sure. But it would appear this way. God answered the prayer of Jebes in a spectacular and contemporary way. We must remember the Book of Chronicles written by Ezra the Scribe. This perhaps gives us a clue. For there is one other reference to Jebes and his beloved and blessed book here in 1 Chronicles, chapter 2, verse 55. It was seen that Jebes made a tremendous impact on God's people. And after the Babylonian captivity, the chief men in the nation were not the priest or the peers of royal blood, but the scribes.

They were the intelligentsia, the opinion makers, the men who ran the country. And apparently, again, we were reading in Scripture just a little. Apparently, Jebes made so great an impact for God and his fellows that they decided his name must never be forgotten. So they built a city, populated it with the scribal families and called it Jebes. Some critical takeaways. Beginnings need not determine endings. Hallelujah. While we had little to do with our commencement, we have everything to do with our conclusion.

Two, every name, person, and story matters. God's only favorites, if you could call them that, are those who turn to Him. Three, boldness often brings blessing. It is enlightening to observe how much God honors and rewards a spirit of Godly courage. And I just leave you with these examples. Abraham. He courageously interceded for Sodom and God affirmed every time he asked. Moses interceded for Israel so much so that he said, if you need to, blot me out in their place. Or he asked God, after God had just amazingly said to him, all right, I'll go with you.

And Moses went the next step and he says, and God, one more request, show me yourself. Show me your glory. And I was bold. It's bold. But

guess what? God, I don't know. Hannah asked, she didn't ask for a child. That would have been enough. You'd almost think, Hannah, I mean, just be happy for something. Happy for a child. Oh no, no, no, she was very specific with the Lord. Lord, I want a man, child. That's bold. Jacob. Jacob said, he would not let the angel go until he got the blessing, the assurance of God's favor, protection.

He came to that woman who persistently asked Jesus to touch her daughter. Remember Jesus? This isn't for him. I came to that woman. This is one of the dogs. What'd she say? Even the dogs get crumbs. That's bold. That's bold. What happened? She got her request. And would God put a holy boldness of spirit in us? We say, God, I'm not asking for survival in this situation. I'm asking you to bring a thriving to this relationship. I'm brushing you to bring a definite understanding of the calling you have upon my life that you helped me to fulfill it and on and on and on.

The application could go of the Holy Spirit speaking that to you or through you. That's great. Father, I thank you for Jbezz, Lord. A man who did not allow his pain to cause him to be stuck, but rather became a pathway of blessing hope, possibly an example to us yet today. God, I'm asking, Lord, that you'd help us through you to let you redefine or rename us as it were. And ultimately, thank you. If we're a child of God, we have the name of God upon us. Thank you, Lord. Thank you for our Father, our Heavenly Father, who indeed knows how to work everything together for good.

We praise you for this. We trust you, Lord. In Jesus' name, everyone said, Amen. Thank you for your patience. You're dismissed.

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