

Carey Baptist Church – 03rd of March 2024

1 Chronicles 4: v:9&10 – Being above average.

Jabez! The name suddenly appears within all the descendants of Judah.

Have you read the 2 books of Chronicles? Full of names and clans. The writer stops right here what we heard today and gives a sketch of this remarkable man, Jabez. Just two versus stand out, but then he disappears and apart from this, we don't hear him anywhere else in the Bible. Then why did Chami choose to preach this at Carey? We need to ask the Lord that question as HE is the one (I trust) who wanted me to share this with you. I also trust that the Lord may have felt that we are trying to settle to an average and be happy with what we got! Then here comes the Lord and says, that we need to be high above the average, therefore HE has named the talk as "Being above average".

1/ Let's look at HIS precious Word. The verse starts stating that Jabez was more honourable than his brothers. This shows that he stood out from the crowd. And for the right reasons.

2/ Sounds he was successful. But how? The verse goes on to say that his mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain."

3/ The Bible scholars assume that Jabez was a handicap. But we don't know. Yet, there should be a reason why his mother gave birth to him in pain.

4/ The crux of the matter is not that he was a handicap or the reason why his mother suffered, *but* the point is that he did not sit in a corner and kept complaining about the difficulties or try to blame anyone else.

5/ BUT, went straight to the right person! Who? **God of Israel**. Jehovah, El Shaddai, El Elyon, Elohim, Yahweh, The Great I am, in whatever the Name we call HIM, the Almighty, all powerful only living God!

6/ And there were three secrets for his success. Will briefly have a look at them now!

7/ Jabez had great ambition. He wanted to do great things for God and wanted God to do great things through him.

8/ He had a growing faith, and he was a genuine prayer warrior.

9/ Why do we think that he had great ambition? One thing for sure is that he did not confuse fear with humility. It is not a demonstration of any fear just because we are humble! Being humble is not a weakness.

10/ Yes, we get afraid sometimes because we are human, but that fear disappears when we feel the presence of the Lord. Because the Lord Jesus is the true Love where 1 John 4:18 says “*perfect love casts out fear*”.

11/ Then, he did not confuse laziness with contentment. Oh, yea, I am happy with the way I was born, and I can live with this. I am content.

12/ No, he wanted to go beyond his abilities so that the power of God would be demonstrated. Never try to settle for just a glass of water when the Lord has given you a sea to explore.

13/ We all (or most of us, certainly me) would like to retire and give life a break thinking that we’ve done enough. But believe when I say that the day will come where we meet the Lord face to face, and we would regret, saying “oh, I should have done more”.

14/ More of what! Earn more money or earn more fame? No, more to build the kingdom of God.

15/ Secondly, Jabez not only had great ambition but had a growing faith that God would do something about his situation.

16/ The 18th century, great Baptist Missionary Rev. William Carey once said, “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God”.

17/ Jabez did not have any specific talent, on the contrary, he was less able. If you and me are in the same predicament, then thank God because then God can lift you up to the highest point that HIS supernatural power would be demonstrated clearly.

18/ Jabez, refused to allow his less able nature to hold him back. We also should take the word ‘impossible’ out of our vocabulary. And replace it with Mark 9:23 “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

19/ Actually at this point if you remember about the boy who was evil possessed, who Jesus healed. The father said to Jesus “If you can” Then Jesus repeated the phrase as a question to the boy’s father saying, “‘If you can’?” then said, “*Everything is possible for one who believes.*” Mark 9:23. Jesus confirmed that everything is possible with God.

20/ Jabez prayed, and God granted him what he requested. Why? Because he prayed genuinely, Honestly and Openly.

21/ He prayed for the right things. And to the right God.

22/ Men and women of Prayer are noteworthy. God honours them and heaven takes note of them. Even the evil one takes note of them.

23/ Evil flees when he sees the weakest Christian on knees.

24/ Jabez cried out to the Lord saying ““Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory!” Never think that asking things for yourself is selfish!

25/ Because, God is our loving father. If we would not ask HIM, who else would we ask? James 4:2 says, “You do not have because you do not ask God”. How sad is that for people who always expecting compassion thinking that they don’t have! But not asked God yet.

26/ Sometime our Prayers are so high level. “Lord bless the universe or Lord bless this world, Lord bless the people” and if the Lord asks, “bless with what my child?”

27/ Do not be afraid to be specific. Tell God what you want specifically, or what you want someone else to have.

28/ Go to God, as if you are going to a business planning meeting. Take the facts what you have and ask the Lord, this is what I have, and these are my plans, what do you think!

29/ In Jeremiah 33: 3 God says, ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’ No one else would even know but the Lord will reveal to you. HE has plans to prosper us and not to harm us.

30/ Our Lord Jesus ensured to enclose these personal petitions in the model Prayer, HE taught us “give us this day our daily bread”.

31/ Ephesians 3: 20 says that “God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us”.

32/ Jabez prayed for God’s presence and for God’s protection in his life. *“Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.”*

33/ And God granted his request. This is the assurance what I want to end with, **‘And God granted him what he requested’**.

34/ What an assurance and what a blessing we have. 1 John 5:14 says that “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us”.

And if it's God's Will to bless you, enlarge your territory, enlarge your vision, and to keep you from the evil one, continue to keep HIS hand upon you and your family, then who can stop that!

May the Good Lord continue to bless you with HIS Peace, Joy and HIS ever presence now and forevermore. Amen.