

From a Nobody to a Somebody



I Chronicles 4:9-10.

“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 may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”

There are stories in the Bible of people who inspire me to do more for my Savior. Stories of nobodies that become somebodies. Both men and women, such as Esther, who was not born into royalty, rather she was a Jewish girl living in a foreign nation. The Jewish people had been carried to Babylon and Esther's parents had died. She was brought up by a cousin Mordechai. This is the Cinderella story of the Old Testament. Esther came from absolute obscurity to the Royal Palace of Persia and married the most powerful ruler on Earth. The point I am making is let no man or woman, boy or girl, ever look at his or her situation in life and say my surroundings have been so humble that I cannot reach for greatness because I am a nobody.

Consider Moses whose parents were slaves in Egypt, living in a mud hut working to make bricks for Pharaoh. What possible future could this son of a slave have? He became one of the greatest prophets of God, even God himself said there is none like my prophet Moses.

Then there is Gideon who, when God called him to be a deliverer in **Judges 6:15** **“And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.”** Here are some nobodies who become somebodies. I have

always been blessed by stories like this, even of modern age of a people like Abraham Lincoln, who was brought up in such poverty, but yet with all of his setbacks in life he became the president of the United States.

I think the devil tries to belittle us and stop us from getting a dream of doing something big for God. I remember battling with the devil to do something for God. The Mountain Ash Baptist Church was just a small congregation when I was a foreman on a strip mining job. The little church had a coal stove sitting in the middle of it and no bathrooms inside of it. When I read about people like Jabez and others who were nobodies, but become a somebody I was impressed and I knew I had to do something for my Lord as well. This is what impresses me about Jabez. The books of First and Second Chronicles are written to record or Chronicle the history of Israel. For the most part the early chapters of I Chronicles were dry and seemly endless list of names. In fact, by the time we read **1 Chronicles 4:9** you have read more than 425 people's names.

Then suddenly and without explanation there is a change. We read that Jabez was more honorable than his brother. Now the question causes us to think a moment and asked ourselves what causes some people to rise to the top? Why was Jabez more honorable than all of the rest? What caused this man to be a standout like a rose in the desert? Was it that he was more intelligent? Could it be that he was wealthy? Was he more gifted? Or was he born to into a standout family? No, the truth

of the matter is he was a nobody that become a somebody. I think he discovered the formula for greatness and God places it in the Scripture for you and I to discover. Here is how a nobody can become a somebody.

I. His Sanctified Ambition. Vs 9-10

Jabez had a sanctified ambition he wanted to do something big for God. I think God liked it. I mean, he granted his request. This was not a selfish request to boost his self-esteem. Jabez was not in competition with some other church, or some other preacher to see who could have the biggest yield or the biggest budget. I do realize that this happens all too often in our churches.

In **Jeremiah 45:5a** “**And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.**” We need to keep the right spirit and the right motive in our service for God. Notice he prayed in **verse 10**, “**Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed.**” He wanted to do something great for God. He was grateful for what he had, but he wanted more. He asked for a larger responsibility, a bigger opportunity to do something great for God that it might honor Him.

A. He Was Less than Average.

The reason I say this is according to the Scripture his mother called his name Jabez. His name meant sorrowful. In Bible times names were very important; they had a lot of meaning, and even told a story. Like the name Moses means to be drawn out of the water. When Moses was just a baby God preserved him and rescued him in a time

when babies were being in killed to make him one of the greatest prophets there ever was. So what was the story behind this baby being called Sorrowful? Some scholars have speculated that Jabez was born an illegitimate child causing his mother emotional pain. You will also notice there is no mention of his father in the Scripture. This boy suffered a lot of shame; he also had a handicap he would have to overcome. Jabez did not have a good beginning and could have easily allowed it to bring failure to his life. You can imagine his neighbors seeing him as a young boy and saying Poor Jabez, he will never have a chance to amount to anything in life. He had no dad, like some today raised on Welfare. But Jabez had more in his mind.

It is not a crime to be poor. I grew up poor grew up in a home with five rooms and a path. The path went out back to a telephone booth, I never made any calls from there, but I got called are quite often. There was no water in the house that ran unless we went to the well and brought it back and ran with it. My mother cooked on a coal wood-burning stove. My father was illiterate with no education could not read or write. What chance did I have coming up to the anything in in this world? You see, it's not how you begin. Be like Jabez, he would not allow his past to defeat his future.

I read once of a man who was selling some balloons of all different colors. When a little black boy came up to the man and asked him if those black balloons go as high as those white balloons? The man understanding what the little boy was

saying said young man. It's not what's on the outside of these blooms it makes it go, but it's what's on the inside that makes it happen. It is what's on the inside of you that will determine how high you can go.

B. He Had a Lot of Ambition.

Jabez said, **Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast.** Now Jabez was very ambitious. The difference often between success and failure is that the desire that is on the inside of you. There is nothing wrong with doing well in life for God. In fact, Jesus expects you to do well. In Matthew 25 in the parable of the talents, Jesus gives out those talents and he tells them even though they differ some He expects you to use them to grow. In **verse 27** it says, **“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”** Jesus expects us to grow, to be ambitious, to grow in Sunday school, grown in our youth group, our choir, our bus ministry, and our church. We read in **Deuteronomy 12:20 “When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee.”** You should be ambitious to grow, not to be satisfied with the status quo. I remind you Jabez did not ask for a bigger harvest. No, he said, I don't care to work in the fields, just give me more land to work, I don't care to get up early and work hard or even stay out late. The only way to grow a ministry is to work hard to pray hard, to visit more, and to expect God to do great things. William Carey said,

“Attempt great things for God expect great things from God.”

II. His Specified Petition. Vs 10

Now Jabez called on the God of Israel. I want you to see how he prayed. The difference between this man and all the others is right here. This was a praying man. I mean in more than 425 names all of which drawled their breath, but neglected to pray to the God up in Heaven who could do all and more than they could asked for. We need to learn this or we will never accomplish anything. You see we must pray. In **James 4:2** we are told, **“Yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”** Here was a man who knows how to please God. A man of power!

A. The Purpose of His Prayer.

Jabez called on the God of Israel. **Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast.** This is a specific prayer. He prayed with purpose, he knew what he wanted and asked God for it. Now, while he was specific, his request was not small. I think sometimes our small prayers are an insult to our omnipotent God. You don't give Him the opportunity to show the world what a wonderful and great God can do! We read in **Psalms 81:10, “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”** God reminds them of His great power. How that with miracles He had brought them out of Egypt, from bondage in such a marvelous and wondrous way. Here He says **“open**

thy mouth wide.” When I think about that I think about those little birds in the nest when the mommy bird would come with something to eat. They open their mouth so wide that their heads almost disappeared! I think that's how God wants us to pray with big prayers. The Bible says in **Ephesians 3:20 “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”**

B. The Power of His Prayer.

Jabez asked **“that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil.”** Jabez is praying for the presence and the power of God to be with him. When God's presence comes into a church service, or into a Christian's life and the blessings begin come, you can expect some trouble. Jabez knew that he could not do God's work without God's power.

As a Christian leader said, “if the Holy Spirit were taken out of the world, 95% of all Christian service would continue.” I mean, 95% of all the teaching would keep going on, 95% of all singing would keep going on, 95% of all preaching that is being done would continue. What does this mean? It means we are operating in the area of the flesh. It seems as though today we don't even need God. It is no wonder to me, we are so unproductive in our churches today. Jabez said I do not want to serve in the strength of the flesh; I want the power of God on my life. When God comes, success will come with it. I am talking about a success that cannot be explained. When I think of the Mountain Ash Baptist Church that God has built and I stand

amazed. When people come to see the church they know that this has to be the work of God. The reason we're a country church with few and poor people and a nobody for a pastor. I believe God likes to take little people, weak people, nobodies, and make somebodies to make something amazing out of it that He might get all the credit!

Look again here before we move on. Notice he asked for God's power to protect him from evil. This is because when God starts blessing, the devil starts blasting. When you began to grow and increase your church, Sunday school, or your youth ministry, you will not escape the devil's attention. You also will come under attack by him. Now, some believe the people God is using free from temptation, but that is wrong. In fact, they are prime candidates for it.

III. He is Satisfied Condition. Vs 10

Notice, at the end God had granted him what he requested. God gave him what he asked for, Jabez honored God and God honored him. He wasn't afraid to ask for something big. I once read of a man who asked Napoleon for an island. Napoleon actually gave the island to him. When someone asked Napoleon why he granted the request for in the entire island, Napoleon said "The man had honored me with such a large request."

Thou art coming to a King.
Big petitions with the King.
His power and grace are such.
Thou canst not asked to much.

A. What is Success?

I believe success in your life can be found in the will of God. Don't be afraid of the will of God, do not be afraid to trust God for the things that you desire. **Psalms 37:4** says, **“Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”**

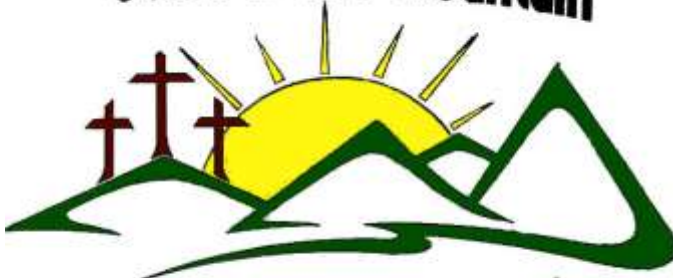
Yes, success is finding God's will and doing the best you can for God. It may be pastoring a small church and in one of these hollers in the county we live in, or it may be teaching the Sunday school class. If that's God's will you should bloom where God plants you. Success is finding God's will, regardless of what or where it is. A person can never do better than simply serving God where he is regardless of the surroundings.

B. What is Satisfaction?

Being in God's will is satisfaction, no matter whether you are a pastor of a small country church, you are a Sunday school teacher, a bus driver, or working in a sound room. It is just knowing when you are doing what God wants for your life. When you are doing what God has called you to do, there is a peace and satisfaction with being who you are and serving where you are. We have some missionary friends serving in Alaska. Alaska has the highest rate of suicide than any were in the United States. I went there and visited on a mission trip to check on our friend, Jeff Suffrage. I found out why this rate is so high because it is so cold and dark most of the time. I thought to myself, what on earth

could get Jeff to leave this good place in Tennessee. I mean, he had a manager's job; he lived in a \$400,000 home, and had everything going his way. The truth is, when you know you're doing God's will, where God want you at, there's a satisfaction that comes over you that this world cannot understand. A satisfaction that everybody needs in their heart to know they're doing what God wants them to do in the very area where God want you to do it.

"Come To The Mountain"



Mountain Ash TM

Baptist Church

Pastor Billy Carpenter

390 Buck Creek Road

Williamsburg, KY 40769

(606) 786-4878