

## **A Simple Prayer**

Our readings this week walk us through much of 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, and many familiar Biblical stories. We find the birth and God's call of young Samuel, the capture and return of the ark by the Philistines, and Israel's desire for a king and Saul's reign. We also read of Saul's disobedience and David taking over the throne, the account of David versus Goliath, and Saul's jealousy and the beginning of his relentless pursuit of David. Stepping into 1 Chronicles, we find a small band of Jews returning from exile in Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem. The author, possibly Ezra, gives them the encouragement needed by emphasizing through genealogies that they were a part of a long history of God's people and a part of the line of David.

All of these stories packed into one week-it is a lot. You may even feel overwhelmed at first, like I was. But as I read, God revealed an interesting and meaningful detail. Nestled in the middle of yet another seldom-read genealogy, in maybe one of the least-read books, I found the mini-biography of an obscure man named Jabez. Now in Bible times, all names had a special meaning, and for some reason, Jabez's mother gave him a name that means "pain" or "to cause pain." Although 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 are the only verses you will find concerning Jabez, his two-sentence, four-part prayer is worth noticing.

We do not know much about Jabez's life; however, with a name like that, it probably wasn't easy. We are told that he was more honorable than his brothers. He found hope

and cried out to the God of Israel who had delivered his forefathers from their enemies and given them a land of plenty. And just as God had done for Hannah, He heard Jabez's prayer, granted his request, and changed his life forever.

The prayer was simple and direct:

*"Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free of pain."*

When Jabez asked God to bless him, he wasn't looking for more material things, but rather for the abundant, unlimited goodness that only God can bestow. An enlarged territory was requesting more influence, responsibility, and opportunities to touch hearts and lives for God's glory. Asking for God's hand to be with him assures us that Jabez understood that God helps those who trust in Him and seek to do His will.

This lesson is true for us today. No matter how bad the circumstances, God never abandons His people or leaves them without hope. God still answers the prayers of those who seek to do His will, and He always wants hearts that are truly dedicated to His service.

I wonder what would happen if we all prayed Jabez's prayer on a daily basis? That little prayer just might make a big difference, not only for you, but for Calvary Church as well.

~ **Bev Tuitman**

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### **April 8th Readings**

**RUTH 4:13-22**

**1 CHRONICLES 2:9-55**

**1 CHRONICLES 4:1-23**

**1 SAMUEL 1:1-8**

### **April 9th Readings**

**1 SAMUEL 1:9-4:11**

**April 10th Readings**

**1 SAMUEL 4:12-8:22**

**April 11th Readings**

**1 SAMUEL 9:1-12:25**

**April 12th Readings**

**1 CHRONICLES 9:35-39**

**1 SAMUEL 13:1-5**

**1 SAMUEL 13:19-23**

**1 SAMUEL 13:6-18**

**1 SAMUEL 14:1-52**

**April 13th Readings**

**1 SAMUEL 15:1-17:31**

**April 14th Readings**

**1 SAMUEL 17:32-19:17**

**PSALM 59**

**1 SAMUEL 19:18-24**