

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

13 April 2014

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

The Ascension (Luke 24:50-53)

A.M. Lesson:

The Weeds and the Wheat
(Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)

P.M. Lesson:

God's Family (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Wednesday:

Bibles for Ukraine with Ben Mereness

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

The Prayer of Jabez

review by John A. Beardsley III

condensed from

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/BookReviews/jabez.htm>

The prayer of Jabez is found in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10:

Jabez was more respected than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, for she said, "I experienced pain when I gave birth to him." Jabez called out to the God of Israel, "If only you would greatly bless me and expand my territory! May your hand be with me! Keep me from harm so I might not endure pain!" God answered his prayer (NET).

That's it. Jabez was a good and honorable man who

asked God to bless him and God did. It's an example of God providing for and caring for His chosen people. Jabez asked and God sovereignly chose to answer. The focus of Jabez's prayer is on God and His provision and protection. Jabez asked and our loving Father gave him what He requested—not because Jabez said the right thing or manipulated God into granting his request, but because God decided to be glorified through Jabez by answering his prayer. Period. End of story.

The subtitle of the book[by Bruce Wilkinson] is *Breaking Through to the Blessed Life*. The publisher's back-cover promo reads:

Do you want to be extravagantly blessed by God? Are you ready to reach for the extraordinary? To ask God for the abundant blessings He longs to give you? Join Bruce Wilkinson to discover how the remarkable prayer of a little-known Bible hero can release God's favor, power, and protection. You'll see how **one daily prayer** can help you leave the past behind—and break through to the life you were meant to live (Bold added).

In the Preface to the book, Wilkinson writes:

I want to teach you how to **pray a daring prayer that God always answers**. It is brief—only one sentence with four parts—and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe **it contains they key to a life of extraordinary favor with God**. This petition has radically changed what I expect from God and what I experience every day by His power. In fact, thousands of believers who are applying its truths are seeing **miracles happen on a regular basis** (Emphasis added).

Wilkinson then describes how to pray Jabez's prayer:

The next morning, I prayed Jabez's prayer **word for word**. And the next. And the next. Thirty years later, I haven't stopped. If you were to ask me what sentence—other than my prayer for salvation—has revolutionized my life and ministry the most, I would tell you tell you that it was the cry of a gimper named Jabez,

who is still remembered not for what he did, but for what he prayed—and for what happened next (p. 11, Bold added).

I challenge you to make **the Jabez prayer for blessing** part of the daily fabric of your life. To do that, I encourage you to **follow unwaveringly** the plan outlined here **for the next thirty days**. By the end of that time, you'll be noticing significant changes in your life, and the prayer will be on its way to becoming a treasured, lifelong habit (p. 86, Bold added).

Wilkinson claims that if we'll just pray the prayer of Jabez, word-for-word, every day for a month, then we'll see God's power released in our lives. To Wilkinson, the key isn't God's choice to answer Jabez's prayer. The key is that Jabez stumbled upon the right formula for asking things of God. Wilkinson reverses the cause and effect and implies that Jabez was honorable because he figured out the right way to pray. Wilkinson's emphasis is on Jabez finding the correct method, instead of on God and His Sovereignty.

A brief examination of Wilkinson's major tenets reveal the errors in his teachings:

....

2) Jabez's prayer or Jesus' prayer? In Matthew 6:5-13 (and Luke 11:2-4), Jesus gives us some instructions on how to pray. Jesus says "after this manner" is how we should pray. Jesus' prayer was a template or guide for us to follow as we talk with God.... Yet Wilkinson encourages folks to pray Jabez's prayer verbatim, every day. Wilkinson is clearly selling Jabez's prayer as a Scripturally-sanctioned incantation that can guarantee blessings.

....

4) Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez* is more about the wisdom and shrewdness of the one doing the asking than the greatness of the One who answers the prayer (i.e., "Jabez's ... request is a brilliant but little-understood strategy for ... a blessed life"; p. 63). The major theme of the book is Wilkinson's belief that Jabez "got it right"—that Jabez figured out exactly what it took to get something from God and that was why he was considered more honorable than everyone else. Wilkinson implies that those who pray Jabez's prayer are just more clever than those who don't.

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6) The book encourages and sanctions selfishness as part of one's relationship with God. The Bible teaches that the believer's prayer is the process of our lining up our will with the will of God, and then obeying (Rom. 8:16-17; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). If my prayer does not line up with

God's will as revealed in the Scriptures, then I need to ask Him to change my heart.... But there is no cry to God to change our hearts in The Prayer of Jabez. Selfishness for it's own sake is encouraged.

....

James Dobson's endorsement of The Prayer of Jabez has caused the book's sales to explode. Dobson has given credibility to what would have otherwise been denounced as the prosperity gospel or "name-it-and-claim-it" theology....

The real tragedy of Bruce Wilkinson's book will be the carnage created as desperate souls follow his advice and pray Jabez's prayer for a month, and yet see no change or see things getting worse around them. The book has no discussion of what to do when the prayer seems to fail (e.g., a child dies, a marriage fails, a job is lost, healing does not come, etc.).... Yet Wilkinson has guaranteed that the prayer will work. The clear implication is that a failed prayer equals failed faith.

Wilkinson teaches a shallow "results-oriented" faith that is supposed to guarantee success, as opposed to a deep, abiding, loving relationship with our Father that will sustain us through heartaches, failure, and success....

IF I have been crucified with Christ, and IF it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, AND the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me, THEN the prayer of Jabez is irrelevant to my life. Why? Because the Christ in me would not seek the Father's blessing for Himself, but for those around me. And our prayers should always be for our neighbor first, not ourselves.

News

Gail Daly: Her heart surgery has been postponed.

NO POTLUCK on April 20! The potluck has been moved to April 27.

April 26, 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.: Picnic @ the fairgrounds.

May 2: Elder Appreciation Dinner. Details TBA.

May 11: Donuts & Coffee @ 9 A.M. in the Anex.

Prayer List:

Hattie Hedrick, Della Phillips, H.L. Boling, Jerry Robinson's mother Norma, Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Faye Atchley, Nicolas and Annie Self, Jonda Gardner, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey.

Back issues are posted at
<http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>

