

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Ask God for His Presence and Protection—The Prayer of Jabez (Part III)

We have reached the final part of our series on Jabez's prayer. Over the last two Sundays, we explored the first two petitions—"Bless Me" and "Enlarge My Territory"—learning the importance of asking for God's provision and prosperity. Today, we will examine Jabez's remaining two requests: God's Presence and God's Protection. We will look at these in detail and consider how we can apply these lessons to our own prayer lives.

The first of these petitions focuses on the active presence of the Lord. Jabez prayed that God's hand would be with him. But what did it mean for Jabez to ask, "Let your hand be with me" (1 Chronicles 4:10)? As a member of the tribe of Judah—the royal line of Abraham and King David—Jabez likely understood the spiritual legacy of God's power. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 37:23-24: "The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in Him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand." Because of God's mighty hand, we have the assurance that even if a righteous man falls seven times, he will rise again (Proverbs 24:16).

Think back to the book of Genesis. When Abram was about to receive his new name—Abraham, meaning "the father of many nations"—God revealed Himself by saying, "I am God Almighty..." (Genesis 17:1). The Lord is the Almighty God who created the entire universe out of nothing. When we create something, we use our hands; in the same way, we can say that God's hand formed the heavens and the earth.

In Scripture, God's hand symbolizes His mysterious and active presence. Some say that "God is in the business of creating new creatures in Christ." The Apostle Paul confirms this in 2 Corinthians 5:17-18: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). God's hand is so powerful and dominant that whoever comes to Jesus in repentance and faith can be transformed from their old self into a brand-new being.

In his prayer, Jabez expressed a profound faith: he believed that whatever he asked of the Lord would be accomplished through the power of God's hand. Jabez desired for God to be with him as Immanuel—God with us—in every circumstance. He recognized that God was the true source of everything he possessed and enjoyed. In the same way, we must pray for God's hand to be present with us at all times. We have this assurance because the Lord has promised never to leave us. After giving the Great Commission, Jesus promised His eternal presence, saying: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Our Immanuel God desires to walk with us as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Yet, there are moments when we might wonder if the Lord is truly there—especially we face challenges that leave us feeling uncertain, anxious, or helpless. I will admit, there

are times I cry out to God because of my own struggles. In those moments, I ask God for His guidance, His power, and His peace. I used to think that I had to hold on to God's hand firmly—that if I let go, I would lose His presence. But as I look back, I realize the truth: The Lord my God has always been the one holding my hand. He holds me firmly, regardless of how weak I feel. In fact, when I am at my weakest, He holds me even tighter. The Lord reassures us in Isaiah 41:10: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Because of the grace and mercy of our Immanuel God, and by the strength of His righteous right hand, He restores our feeble arms and weak knees. He is the One who empowers us to keep "running the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1,12).

It has been said that life is like a voyage across the sea. During this journey, we encounter all kinds of conditions. Sometimes, we enjoy the ride under a clear blue sky, gliding on a gentle breeze where we don't even need to row because the winds are so smooth. In those moments, we feel that everything has been prepared for us and everyone is supporting us. At other times, we have to row with everything we have just to keep moving forward. And then, there are the moments when the storms and winds of life strike without warning. They hit us, our families, our friends, and our community, bringing deep trouble and fear. In those moments, it can feel as if we are struggling all by ourselves.

When we face these sufferings—just as Jabez did— we must pray for God's hand to be with us. We need His hand in our relationships, in our homes, in our work, and in every corner of our lives. Let us pray that God's wise hand will guide us when we make important decisions. Let us pray that God's mighty hand will uphold us when we are weak. Let us pray that God's merciful hand will comfort us when we are lonely. Let us pray that God's peaceful hand will steady us when we are afraid. And let us pray that God will do these same things for our loved ones and for all those who desperately need His presence in their lives today.

The second petition of Jabez's prayer is for God's Protection. He prayed that God would keep him from harm so that he would be free from pain. In various Bible translations, the word "harm" is also rendered as "evil." This offers us two beautiful ways to understand this request: "Keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain," and "Keep me from evil so that I might not cause pain." We must pray for God to protect us from both external harm and internal evil. No matter how carefully we look after our bodies, it is ultimately God who sustains us. While we are responsible for taking care of ourselves and our loved ones, we must ultimately rely on God to protect us in times of danger.

When we examine our text for this morning—Psalm 91—verse by verse, we are amazed by the completeness of God's protection. I want to read the opening verses to you again: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:1-2). In other words, God is our ultimate Protector. The passage continues: "Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your

shield and rampart” (Psalm 91:3-4). In the middle of this Psalm, the writer describes how the enemy might attack us. “A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you” (Psalm 91:7). Here, once again, we see the absolute nature of God’s shield over His people, even when we are exposed to the dangerous attacks of the spirit of evil.

Furthermore, let’s look at how the Lord responds to those who love Him in the closing verses: “Because He loves me, says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation’” (Psalm 91:14-16). Did you notice the depth of God’s security? The phrase “with long life” doesn’t merely refer to the length of our years here on earth; it points toward the eternal life we receive when we are called home to be with the Lord. God’s protection for us begins the very moment we confess that He is our refuge, and it lasts until the moment we are invited to live with Him forever in Heaven. What a blessing! Aren’t we glad to receive such an incredible, everlasting shield?

I have heard many stories of God’s protection through the power of intercessory prayer... Because we live in an imperfect world that can cause us harm, we must ask God for His divine protection. Do we want a life free from unnecessary pain? Yes, we do! Every day—actually, every moment—I ask God to protect me from danger and provide me with His strength. I ask God for His protection not only physically, but also mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. And I don’t stop there. I also pray that God would put a “hedge of protection” around my loved ones and around those whom God has placed on my heart. Let us never underestimate the power of asking the Almighty to stand guard over those we love.

As I mentioned earlier, some translations of the Bible use the word “evil” in place of “harm,” interpreting Jabez’s request as: “Keep me from evil, that I might not cause pain.” There is a profound relationship between evil and pain in this statement. Now, please hear me clearly: I am not saying that if you feel pain in your body or your mind, you are under the influence of an evil spirit. Rather, what I am suggesting is that the enemy often uses evil to cause pain upon our journey of faith. This request, “Keep me from evil,” mirrors the closing of the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus taught His disciples to ask the Father to “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” You see, one of the primary strategies of the enemy is to plant seeds of temptation in our minds.

We see this from the very beginning with Adam and Eve; Satan tempted them, and that temptation led to the original sin—disobedience against God. In the story of Noah, the Bible describes what the world was like before the flood: “The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled” (Genesis 6:5-6). Because of the wickedness in human minds, God’s heart was troubled; in other words, He was in pain. Even King David—one of the most influential men of God in all of Scripture—fell into the enemy’s trap through temptation. When he later repented, he cried out in Psalm 51:4, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your

sight.” David came to realize that his wrongdoing wasn’t just a sin against people; it was an act of evil that wounded God Himself.

As we have learned, the name “Jabez” means “pain.” His very identity was tied to it. But Jabez reached a point where he no longer wanted to cause pain. He knew that he could not keep himself from evil on his own. That is why he prayed so desperately: “Keep me from evil.” Once again, because we live in an imperfect world, temptation is real—and it comes to everyone. No one is exempt. The Bible uses the word “when,” not “if,” regarding temptation (James 1:13). For instance, the Prophet Isaiah speaks about trials using the following phrases: “When you pass through the waters; when you pass through the rivers; When you walk through the fire...” (Isaiah 43:2-3). It is inevitable.

Even Jesus, though He was perfect, faced temptation—both in the wilderness before His public ministry and on the cross before His final ministry. Please understand: it is not a sin to be tempted; it is a sin to give in to temptation. In a spiritual sense, the closer we grow to Christ, the more aware we become of our vulnerability to temptation. When we hear about people who seem very spiritual but fall into immoral behaviors, we may be shocked. But we need to remember that, without the help of the Holy Spirit, we could also fall into similar situations as they did. We must remain humble, recognizing that we all struggle under any given circumstance.

When we are tempted and give in to wrongdoing—whether the act seems small or large—several hurtful things happen at once. First, we hurt ourselves. We corrupt the beautiful image of God within us. Second, we hurt the people around us, and our actions ripple out to them whether we realize it or not. And third, we cause the Lord our God pain. Because of sin, every part involved is wounded. Like Jabez did, as imperfect human beings, we need to urgently ask God to shield us from the temptations of the enemy and provide a victorious life that reflects His holiness in our journey with Him. We must also humbly pray for God to apply His full protection over the hearts of our loved ones—especially our children and grandchildren—guarding them against temptation and keeping their spirits pure.

To conclude this sermon, I want to share an old fable retold by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson... This story reminds us of the vital importance of prayer. Once again, remember how the account of Jabez ends: “And God granted his request” (1 Chronicles 4:10). I don’t believe Jabez prayed this just once. I believe this was a prayer he used every time he knelt before the Lord. Today, I want to challenge us to commit to one thing for the next thirty days. We don’t need more knowledge about prayer; we already know it is important. What we need is to do it. Let us take the prayer of Jabez and pray it daily for ourselves, our loved ones, and our community.

The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 7:7-8: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” I believe everyone in this sanctuary, and those joining us online, has an urgent request today. Who can fulfill

those needs? Our God is the Almighty Creator. There is nothing too big for Him to do, and nothing too small for us to ask. Whatever is on your heart, bring it to Him with humility.

Let us ask God to bless us and our loved ones with His provision, His prosperity, His presence, and His protection. When we keep asking, seeking, and knocking, the abundant blessings God has prepared will be poured out. Through this persistent prayer, we will find His direction, His strength, His wisdom, and His endurance. We will experience Him opening doors where there previously seemed to be no way. I believe that throughout this year, 2026, we will all experience a divine breakthrough. Let us not leave our blessings in the warehouse—let us bring them into our lives through the power of prayer.

**In this sermon, I have used some thoughts from the book entitled “The Prayer of Jabez,” written by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson and the following texts: Psalm 91:1-16 and Matthew 7:7-12.*