

DON'T LET YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE DEFINE AND CONFINE YOU 2

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing Word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

We are back, friends, to continue from where we stopped last time, *don't let your circumstance define and confine you.*

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You for today and for this hour. We want to commit our discussion into Your hands and ask that You will grant me utterance and unction, and that You will open the scriptures to the hearts of the people who are at the other end, my friends, in Jesus' Name I pray. Amen!

Last time, I stopped with the experience of Rachael. Rachael had two responses to her circumstance. From the first one, we saw that she allowed her circumstance to define and confine her. And that was the experience of childlessness. This second experience came when the children came, when God opened her womb, she had the first son, Joseph. And she had the second one. That second one created a circumstance that Rachael did not respond favorably to again. This is from Genesis 35:16-20:

¹⁶ Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷ Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." ¹⁸ And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

In this text, Rachael attempted to make the painful circumstance of her baby's birth define and confine the poor baby. Giving birth to this child was a very painful experience that led to her death. But before she died, she tried to add suffering to her pain. How? She tried to retain the memory of her pain in the name she gave her son, Ben-Oni, which means, son of my sorrow.

Let us not forget that there is a difference between pain and suffering. We saw last time that pain, the physical and emotional feeling that you have, and often very unpleasant in your body or in your emotion, is different from the suffering which is what goes on in your mind as a result of the pain. We said, for example, as a result of pain you could start thinking of what you could have done differently, or how you would have done it better, and what people would think, what they would say. You are adding suffering to your pain.

Rachael is trying to add suffering to the pain by the kind of name she gave this boy or this baby. How often do we try to retain the memory of our pain by relieving the painful experience, how often we renew our pain by retaining tokens of it, tokens of our pain either in our diaries, in artifact; for example, in some places, the mourning dress that widows are made to wear, some of them for one year. That is adding suffering to the pain. These kinds of things are our *benonies*. But Israel, who once was Jacob, Rachael's husband, knew better. Perhaps from experience he had come to appreciate the fact that there was something in a name. He was once Jacob, the deceiver, the *supplanter*, which God changed to Israel, Prince with God. Israel acted quickly and changed the baby's name from Ben-Oni, the son of my sorrow, to Benjamin, son of the right hand. He refused to allow the baby's circumstance to define and confine him to his mother's pain.

We come to the second person that we talked about in our first discussion, and that is the response of Jabez to his circumstance in

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

⁹Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

Jabez was not as fortunate as Benjamin. He apparently did not have a perceptive father to change the name that his mother gave him, a name that defined and confined him to his circumstance. His name explains his painful circumstance of birth. 1 Chronicles 4:9 says: *...his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."* But when Jabez came of age, he made up his mind, that his name would not be a prophetic indicator of his life. According to Zondervan

Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, in biblical times, “A person’s name” and I quote “was either descriptive of the parents’ wishes or prophetic of the personality to be manifested by the one so named.” Jabez did not want his circumstance to define or confine him.

How did he do this? It was through prayer. And Jabez called upon the God of Israel saying: *“Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!”* So God granted him what he requested. This is in 1 Chronicles 4:10.

The Prayer of Jabez, a book by Bruce Wilkerson, was very popular some years ago. It was presented to the Christian church as a panacea – a solution for all problems. Consider the following claims by the author. And I quote him: “Dear reader, 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 talked away in the bible. I believe it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God really. And it goes on to say, “Thousands of believers who are applying its truth are seeing miracles happen on regular basis. Will you join me for personal expression with Jabez? I hope you will.” He goes on to say, “Discover how to release the miraculous power of God in your life. See what God will do for you when you put Jabez prayer to work.”

We preachers must not sell people a bill of gold. By that I mean, promising people a solution that is nonexistent, promising people what God has not promised, and claiming we are speaking in faith. Faith that is not based on the incontrovertible and authoritative Word of God is not faith but presumption and folly. Buyer, beware. By buyer now, I mean those who believe these kinds of talk, those who buy the pronouncements that proceed from the mind of preachers, and not from the mind of God. God backs up only that which He speaks. Praying the prayer of Jabez will not produce any more effect than praying what we call today the Lord’s Prayer or praying the prayer of the saints of the Old Testament or the New Testament. But, the point is that Jabez refused to allow his circumstance to define, confine or control him. He simply told God to deliver him from the aftermath of the circumstance of his life or his birth. He did not want to live with the suffering, the painful memory of his mother’s physical pain. He

prayed that the circumstance that marked his birth and led to his name would not characterize and limit his life. Jabez, as one servant of God puts, did not live up to his name. He lived beyond his name. We need to live, not up to our circumstances, but beyond our circumstances. We cannot permit circumstances to define and confine us. That which caused us pain should not also be allowed to continue causing us to suffer.

PRAYER:

Father, we want to say thank You for leading us through this talk today. We have seen what you've done in the lives of these ones we discussed long ago in the pages of the bible. But we are praying now that these things You did in the pages of the bible will come and be manifested in our lives, that we will live beyond and above the circumstances that try to confine and limit us. Grant this, we pray, in Jesus Name. Amen!