**1 Chronicles 4:9-10 Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore *him* in pain.” 10And 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.**

Last week, we asked the question: while we may have a Passion for Christ, do we have the Passion of Christ? The Passion of Christ is the salvation of people, so that none will perish, but all will have everlasting life. Mark 6:34 says *And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.* People, lost and wandering, no direction, no anchor, no hope – Jesus was moved with compassion. Why? Because the lost are His passion and, when we seek to mimic the Master, reflect our Restorer, copy our Christ, we too must be moved with that same compassion. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires* ***all men*** *to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

For the next several weeks, God willing, we’ll look at prayer. Prayer is our connection to God by the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. It’s through prayer that we come to Salvation and prayer is the first step in our pursuit of the passion of Christ. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for* ***all men,*** *for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.* We make supplications, intercessions for all men – literally, all man faced – all human-kind. Jesus is doing this for us even to this moment. Romans 8:34 and 1 John 2:1 both tell us that. Are we doing this for others and pursuing the passion of Christ? Are we walking in light or in darkness? 1 John 2:9 gives us a clear measuring stick - *He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.*

Prayer is the Chief Exercise of our Faith according to John Calvin. Prayer is the Chief exercise of our Faith. Think about that. How are we doing in the chief exercise of our faith? How clear is the line between us and God? Is it filled with the static of this world called cares and worries? Most, if not all of us, are not very good at humble prayer, supplications and intercessions for others. This isn’t some secret to be hidden in shame, but a truth to be examined and improved. The Pharisee in Luke 18 considered himself justified but was condemned. The tax collector considered himself condemned but went home justified. If prayer is the chief exercise of our faith, how are we doing? No shame. No guilt. Simply where are we and where do we want to be?

In 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, we find the Prayer of Jabez. Little is known about Jabez. In 1 Chronicles 4:9 *Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.”*Jabez was more honorable than his brothers and gives us the meaning of his name, meaning sorrow-maker or pain-maker.

Now the prayer of Jabez comes in verse 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.* We find 3 lessons here: 1) Pray in Humility 2) Pray in Faith 3) Pray in Understanding.

Pray in Humility – Jabez recognized his weakness in relation to God. Isaiah 14:14 *And Jabez called on the God of Israel*. Called out has the idea of kneeling down and humbling self. He understood that he was the petitioner and God was petition grantor. He understood that God owed him nothing but was willing to give him good things. Humility is always the place to start prayer. The first step in humility is to make room for God in our busy schedule. He won’t compete for focus.

Pray in Faith – Jabez embraced the role of faith in relation to God. *Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me.* His name meant sorrow-maker! He didn’t let his name, or his situation define his relationship with God. He didn’t pray “Oh woest me!” He prayed as though God defined who he was and how he’d be used. In our American way, we say – enlarge my territory (give me more stuff). Jabez may have been saying, “Enlarge my influence over others for Your Kingdom.” Whatever Jabez has in his heart, God honored his request! It pleased God and God gave us this prayer as an example.

Pray in Understanding – Jabez understood the power in Prayer in relation to God. *that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!”* Matthew 7:7 *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* Ask in Humility and Faith. Seek in Humility and Faith. Knock in Humility and Faith. We don’t grasp the power we hold in prayer, when we pray in humility and faith, to be used by God in pursuit of the passion of Christ. Jabez did.

Oh, the power we have at our fingertips, to be squandered or magnified. God will magnify prayers that magnify Him, enlarge those who seek to enlarge the Kingdom, honor those that honor Him. Matthew 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* Jabez sought the Kingdom of God and *So God granted him what he requested.* God honors our petitions when we pray in humility, faith, and understanding, aligning our requests with His Will.

This week – let’s listen to our prayers. Is our passion aligned with Jesus? Are we seeking to introduce the Savior to others? Many have a passion for Jesus… few have the passion of Jesus. Humility, Faith, Understanding… take inventory this week. If Prayer is the Chief Exercise of Faith, what shape is your Faith in right now?