

Series: THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

## THE FAVOR OF THE LORD, Part Three

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The favor of the Lord brings a bold confidence. Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to save. The old system of worship would be replaced by a new and better covenant of grace as Jesus came as the Messiah, the Surety of the Covenant, the High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, and so much more. But a person must repent and believe.

Believers in Jesus Christ enter into the rest of God. He gives rest to those who labor and are heavy laden. Those who take His yoke upon them and learn from Him, find rest for their souls.

<sup>28</sup>Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.  
Berean

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter’s sermon resulting in 3,000 people saved. These were those who embraced Peter’s message about Jesus Christ as Savior. Acts 2 speaks of the fellowship of the believers. So here we have an account of the infant church.

Acts 2:42-47. <sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs.

<sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need.

<sup>46</sup>With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

From this passage we can note that these early believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching. They devoted themselves to the fellowship, to taking communion together, and to prayer. This prayer was corporate, public, and private. As they did this, a sense of awe came over everyone. The apostles performed many signs and wonders.

In this infant church, all the believers were together and held things in common. They sold their possessions and goods and shared with anyone who was in need.

“Possessions” stands for real property, “goods” for personal. There seems to be an effort to determine legitimate need, so not everyone who applied received. (Ellicott)

These early believers continued to meet daily in the temple courts, speaking of worship. They shared meals with gladness and sincerity of heart. They praised God and enjoyed the favor of all the people. So all that they were doing led to favor. Favor led to people being added to their number every day as God granted grace and favor to the infant church.

### **We need the favor of the Lord.**

Proverbs 19:12 "The king's anger is as dangerous as a lion's. But his favor is as refreshing as the dew on grass." Another version says it like this... "The king's anger is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like welcome rain."

Proverbs 16:15 "When a ruler is happy and pleased with you, it's like refreshing rain, and you will live."

So when we have the Lord's FAVOR our lives, we will experience times of refreshing and live.

**The face of the Lord is against those who do evil.** Swerve out of the way from evil, from that which is malicious. Hate evil. Cling to what is good. Do good. See Psalm 34:16; Psalm 109:13; Proverbs 10:7.

1 Peter 3:10-12. <sup>10</sup>For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. <sup>11</sup>He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. <sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are inclined to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Berean

How do we obtain mercy and find this FAVOR from God?

1. Prayer Brings Favor! Prayer changes things. God wants to hear the prayers of the righteous.

First, turn to 1 Corinthians 1:4-9. <sup>4</sup>I always thank my God for you because of the grace He has given you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup>For in Him you have been enriched in every way, in all speech and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup>because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will sustain you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Paul experienced some scary stuff, times when death was certain. There were times when the attack was beyond what someone could endure, violent times, overwhelming times. Yet God delivered him, delivers, and will deliver. Paul prayed and he also had people praying for him.

This resulted in favor, experiencing deliverance from dangerous times and pending death. But there was also comfort.

The Word of God informs our experiences. Psalm 119:58 "I entreated Thy favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to Thy word."

The word "entreated" here means to "be rubbed or worn even to the point of being wounded." We have to really want God's favor. We have to pursue it, pursue peace, seek the Lord for forgiveness when we sin and experience that Fatherly displeasure, and pursue the Lord to grant repentance. Remember, repentance is a lifestyle. See 2 Timothy 2:25, 26.

A second way to obtain mercy and find FAVOR according to the book of Proverbs is a three-step process of listening, watching, and waiting. Proverbs 8:32-36: Speaking of Wisdom, we read:

<sup>32</sup>“And now, O sons, listen to me:  
blessed are those who keep my ways.  
<sup>33</sup>Hear instruction and be wise:  
and do not neglect it.  
<sup>34</sup>Blessed is the one who listens to me,  
watching daily at my gates,  
waiting beside my doors.  
<sup>35</sup>For whoever finds me finds life  
and obtains favor from the Lord,  
<sup>36</sup>but he who fails to find me injures himself;  
all who hate me love death.” Proverbs 8:32-36 ESV

God is God Only Wise. Christ is the Wisdom of God, God in flesh appearing. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. This passage tells us to listen, to perceive with interest for the purpose of obeying, with a heart to obey. We are to watch and thus stay awake and be alert daily. The NT provides lots of encouragement to be alert for varying reasons, especially in reference to Jesus coming again. So we are to wait, stand guard, observe, and give heed, like a watchman on the wall. Listen up and pay attention. Look circumspectly every day. Live with a confident hope as one waiting expectantly at Wisdom's doors. Find Wisdom and find life, obtaining favor from the Lord. And take note of this truth that the one who fails to find Wisdom injures himself. All who hate Wisdom love death.

A third way to receive favor from the Lord is found in Proverbs 13:13-15.

<sup>13</sup>Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself,  
but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.  
<sup>14</sup>The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,  
that one may turn away from the snares of death.  
<sup>15</sup>Good sense wins favor,  
but the way of the treacherous is their ruin. Proverbs 13:13-15. ESV

The teaching of the wise when received with understanding is rewarded. Good sense wins favor. A teacher can teach, but the responsibility to learn is on the learner. We have to be more than just hearers of the Word; we must apply it and be doers of it, as James exhorts in his epistle.

Jesus came. He is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Wisdom of God. He taught truth, modeled it, utilized on-the-job training for His disciples, for example. Not everyone

received Jesus or His good news. Teaching imparts knowledge. Isaiah 5:13 states: "My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge; and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude is parched with thirst." There are severe consequences for lack of knowledge.

Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, went through all the Scriptures demonstrating why it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and die. He taught them and supplied knowledge, but they didn't get it until He opened their eyes to understand. Jesus reveals truth. When that happens, the veil is removed and transformation begins to happen. Now these two are no longer grieving, but excited. They recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread because Jesus opened the eyes of their understanding. Favor begins to materialize.

We keep pressing in and pressing forward. Paul says of himself in Philippians 3:13-15:

<sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal [mark] to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>All of us who are mature should embrace this point of view. And if you think differently about some issue, God will reveal this to you as well." Philippians 3:13-15 Berean

The favor of the Lord comes with advancing in wisdom. "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man". Luke 2:52

One last thing—Hebrews 4.

From Hebrews 4 we learn that Moses would not enter the Promised Land. He died, but **to Joshua, God said, "...arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them... I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."** (Joshua 1:2, 5) Joshua told the people, "The Lord your God is giving you rest, and is giving you this land." (Joshua 1:13)

Hebrews 4 speaks of a Sabbath rest, a rest such that "he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His." (Hebrews 4:10, 11) It is the rest of God. The children of Israel did not enter into this rest because of disobedience, a disobedience that resulted from unbelief.

<sup>10</sup> For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. KJV

We are invited to enter into God's rest, spending our years in the Sabbath-keeping of God, sharing it, the rest of a finished work. When God rested from the act of creation, He didn't become weary, and He didn't continue inactive. Jesus said, "My Father works hitherto..." He is ever at work, repairing, renewing, and sustaining. But the creation was a finished work, meeting with God's approval, satisfying fully, and very good.

**God's rest would bring us to equilibrium. As we think about this invitation to enter God's rest, we are encouraged to understand that Jesus, our great Joshua, has entered into it for us.** He also has ceased from His own work of redemption, as God did from His work of creation. The redemptive work of Christ is a finished work.

On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and is alive forevermore. He sits at the right hand of the Almighty, ever interceding as High Priest of the Order of Melchizedek.

Maybe, we have received the rest of salvation, and even found the rest of submission. In the first, we receive the rest that Jesus gives. In the second, we find rest for our souls. This rest, however, we enter. We possess the land.

Unbelief is the root of all sin, yet we indulge in it every time we turn away and believe another wisdom, another word, another way. Hudson Taylor struggled against sin, living out what Paul wrote about in Romans 7. Hudson Taylor found the answer as the Holy Spirit revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus.

**“But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One.” (Hudson Taylor)**

Trust the Word of God. Evaluate. Consider the warnings in Scripture. We drift, we doubt, we disbelieve, we disobey, we die. Agree with the Word of God. Say the same thing. We learn to hold fast to our confession of the faith.

Jesus sympathizes. After all, it is the way of the cross. It is death that leads to resurrection. Jesus bound Satan in the wilderness when He refused self-gratification (bread), when He refused self-will (throw yourself down) and self-determination of destiny, and when He refused self-seeking (worship me, Satan, and you can have all the kingdoms of the world). Jesus paid the penalty for sins of the body, sins of the soul, and sins of the spirit. He died to satisfy divine justice and rose from the dead, proving that the Father accepted Jesus' atoning work. That work is a finished work.

Jesus knows. He learned obedience in the things which He suffered. He comforts us on our way to the Cross, for He knows what lies beyond, i.e., the crown.

**<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV**

The Christian life is a grace life. The just shall live by faith. Those justified by grace live by faith in future grace. By grace we are continually being saved. We trust for this grace. We come boldly to this Throne of Grace to obtain mercy and find grace and favor. It comes to us as a gift, this grace. Our salvation was purchased by Christ's own Blood and Body offered as a sacrifice for our sin. Because of this, we can draw near with boldness. Let us draw near, receive the grace we need to face the Father, to be judged by the Word of Truth, to be conformed to the image of Christ, to become all that God has declared us to be in Christ.

How do we obtain mercy and find grace and favor? We bring God the Word, Jesus Christ. We come with faith in the Word and offer the Word to obtain the mercy and find

the grace that we need. We receive as we give to God His Word, His Son, His promises, His working of salvation in us. The Living God is the God of All Grace.

Bibliography: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-series/favor-sermon-series-from-jerry-vargo-573>

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Series: THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

## **THE FAVOR OF THE LORD, Part Two**

July 22, 2022

Dr. Mary Craig

Questions:

1. Believers in Jesus Christ, those born again, enter into the rest of God. Identify three aspects of this rest according to Matthew 11:28-30 and Hebrews 4:10, 11.
2. Acts 2:42-47 provides an account of the infant church. What does this passage tell you about the lives of the early believers described here? In your answer, give definition to “possessions” and “goods.” What do we learn from Acts 11:28-30 and Acts 12:25? Also refer to 2 Corinthians 8: 9-15. “Grace giving is giving gladly, generously, graciously, as one purposes in one’s heart, as God guides.” (Dr. Mary Craig)
3. According to Proverbs 19:12 and Proverbs 16:15, what do believers experience when they have God’s favor? The face of the Lord is against those who do evil. Look up Psalm 34:16; Psalm 109:13; Proverbs 10:7, 1 Peter 3:10-12. What are we exhorted to do?
4. Look up 1 Corinthians 1:4-9. How do we obtain mercy and find favor from God? The main point here is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Word of God informs our experiences. Discuss Psalm 119:58.
6. Look up Proverbs 8:32-36. Who is the “me” in this passage? What is the three-step process of obtaining favor in this passage?
7. Look up Proverbs 13:13-15. What is a third way to receive favor from the Lord? How did people react and respond to Jesus? What is the importance of knowledge according to Isaiah 5:13? Is knowledge in and of itself enough? Consider what happened on the road to Emmaus. What was needed beyond knowledge to “see and perceive”?
8. Look up Philippians 3:13-15. What does Paul say of himself regarding the importance of pressing in and pressing forward? Towards what? Look up Luke 2:52. Comment on the connection between the favor of the Lord and advancing in wisdom.

9. Many believers are “out of Egypt” but wander in the wilderness not recognizing their spiritual inheritance in Christ. These doubt God’s Word and are thus restless. God had a Sabbath rest when His creation work was complete, good. (Hebrews 4:4). Israel was to have a rest in Canaan, but what prevented it (Deut. 12:9; Hebrews 3:11). Believers rest in Christ through salvation (Hebrews 4:3; Matthew 11:28). Jesus describes the rest of submission in Matthew 11:28-30. Look at Hebrews 4:11-13. What is emphasized? There remains a rest for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9). What rest is this future rest? (See also Revelation 14:13.) What might be some dangers when believers do not heed the warnings in the Word of God, when they do not listen and allow the Holy Spirit to bring correction? Look up Hebrews 3:12. What was Israel’s sin? What was the consequence for wanting to go one’s own way when God did not permit “returning to Egypt”?

10. Jesus is the Great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for His own. Warren Wiersbe notes:

“(1) God finished His work and rested, so that His rest has been available since Creation.

(2) The Jews failed to enter into their rest.

(3) Many years later (Psalm 95), God said that a rest was still available. “ (Wiersbe, Warren. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989.

What does God see? (Hebrews 4:13; cf. Jeremiah 17:9) What does the Word of God cause us to do when we see what God sees? Look up Joshua 5:13-15. Who is really in command? What did Joshua do? The warning against an evil heart of unbelief is given from a gracious and loving Father. What is the progression that leads to death mentioned in Dr. Craig’s lesson?

11. Look up Hebrews 4:14-16. The believer can come boldly to what Throne? What reason is given in Hebrews 4: 15? What does this mean when we want to give up believing in Christ and confessing faith in Him because circumstances seem overwhelming? What does this mean when we sin “royally” and lose our confidence because we have brought reproach to Christ’s name? The true believer cannot “go back.” Why is there no need to “go back”? So what would one do?

<https://marycraig.org/NewsViews/EnteringTheRest.htm> for more.

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