



Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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Preparing Ourselves for the **NEW YEAR**

Message preached on Sunday Morning, December 29, 2024

Over the past couple weeks we have been taking a look at the FAVOR of God.
(last Wednesday and our Christmas Day message)

HONESTLY...it is one of my favorite things to teach on...because it is so forgotten about.

Psalm 5:12 – “For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.”

“**Favor**” – kind regard, afford special privileges, unfair partiality, preferential treatment.

It is the birthright of every child of God.

Check out: Genesis 12:2 (AMP)
Matthew 1:16,17
Galatians 3:29

SPECIFICALLY: We need to EXPECT FAVOR in our lives.

KEITH BUTLER: Calls it Christian privilege!

UNDERSTAND: As we look forward to the NEW YEAR...we need to put on our expectancy of God’s favor working in our lives.

What happens in the world...should stay in the world...we have an abundance of favors that are working on our behalf.

HONESTLY one of the saddest parts of religion is that they assume that life is a GAMBLE. Sometimes you win...sometimes you lose.

BELOVED: With favor...the deck is ALWAYS stacked in your favor.

QUICK INSERT: It doesn’t mean that battles don’t come...it just means that they turn out in your FAVOR.

ILLUSTRATION: Have you ever seen a television show or a movie...where someone has a special set of skills and they use those skills to play poker or to gamble.

PERHAPS they are able to read people...their faces...count cards...play probabilities...etc...but in the end they win!

It is almost like it is NOT FAIR that they are playing. Everyone else is playing a game of chance, but these guys are playing with a stacked deck...in their favor.

BELOVED: Honestly that is what it is like to be a child of God.

It isn’t because we are special in and of ourselves...

- * We have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to help us in any situation.
 - To tell us secrets.
 - To read circumstances and situations.
 - To give us insight and wisdom

- * We have the privilege to come **before the throne of grace**...to call on help from the God of the Universe.

BELOVED: When we are faced with insurmountable odds...we win!

JERRY SAVELLE: When people say no, circumstances say no, but your God says yes!

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now unto him that is **able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,**

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

THERE IS A PROBLEM when you view God's GOOD NEWS as TOO GOOD.

There is NO WAY. Too good to be true.

BELOVED: When you get to the point where you see the BENEFITS of God as TOO GOOD to BELIEVE...**you have FINALLY stepped through the door to the conversation of what God has in store for you.**

Psalms 103:2—"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:"

NOTICE: "All of his benefits"! He would not have told us to NOT FORGET all of them if...

- a.) ...there were just one or two benefits. That would be easy to remember.
- b.) ...we wouldn't have the habit of forgetting them and letting them go unfulfilled.

That is one of the things I have tried to get us to understand about prayer... it has nothing to do with pleading and begging for God to do something.

It is simply coming to Him, loaded with His Word, and speak what He has already spoken!

"Ask" – aiteo – to put a demand on

In Ephesians 3...Paul is praying for the church at Ephesus...so that they could enjoy all of the favor and blessings of God (vs. 20).

What is he asking to be done...

So they can enjoy those things?

I would also say that these things should be our goal in the new year. Our focus, so that we can fully step into God's benefits.

Ephesians 3:16-21

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be **strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

1.) Build up their inner man!

Romans 8

We spend our times working on our skills (and we should), but if we are going to fulfill the more than enough that God has for us...we should be focused on the inner man.

1 John 5:14,15

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask **any thing according to his will**, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, **whatsoever we ask**, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

- a.) Spend more time in His Word.
Be a student of His Word...Who He is, who we are, what He has given to us, and what we can do (Ephesians 1).
When you know what He has promised...it is easy to understand where His favor comes in.

- b.) Spend more time in prayer.
You will NEVER accomplish God's plan without prayer. Time alone with Him.
Getting Him involved. Hearing His secrets. Finding His wisdom!

17 That Christ may *dwell in your hearts by faith* ; that ye, being *rooted and grounded in love* ,

2.) Walk by faith!

Hebrews 11:6 – Without faith it is impossible to please God.

QUESTION: What pleases God?

ANSWER: Psalm 35:27 – Our prosperity! Us walking in his blessing!

James 1 – Make sure you ask in faith...or else, don't think you will receive anything.

UNDERSTAND: Most Christians don't experience FAVOR because they hope for it to happen...they have not accepted it as part of their lives.

Faith talks about it...expects it...etc.

3.) Walk in love!

BELOVED: This is SOOO HUGE!

When you haven't learned to walk in love...then you end up getting REALLY selfish in your FAVOR.

Genesis 12:2 (AMP) – “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you [with abundant increase of favors] and make your name famous and distinguished, and you will be a blessing [dispensing good to others].”

Romans 12:10 – “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”

UNDERSTAND: When you have consumed yourself with LOVING others and doing FAVORS for others...guess what will come back to you GOOD MEASURE, PRESSED DOWN, SHAKING TOGETHER and RUNNING OVER? Yep, favor!

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.
(go back to #1).

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

4.) Keep your heart set on your God-given assignment.

BELOVED: vs. 16 – strengthened with His might...

Vs. 18 – with all the saints...

Vs. 19 – filled with the fullness of God.

I want you to notice this point...the reason God empowers you and enables you and fills you is to complete the assignment that He has given to you.

Think of Mary, Jesus' mother, she had an assignment...so she needed the favor.

The Apostle Paul had an assignment...he kept his focus, no matter what...and the FAVOR OF GOD sustained him through his assignment.

REMEMBER: The parable of the three servants and the talents?

- * They were the only servants that got the talents...hmmm...favor.

- * They were not given the talents to just make their lives easier, but to fulfill their assignments.

UNDERSTAND: Yes, you need the favor of God for making it through life...but one of the greatest reasons for FAVOR is to accomplish what God has called you to accomplish.

BELOVED: Often time the distractions of life get us off target...

Family...jobs...etc.

It gets us off assignment.

We can start trying to operate in favor for overly selfish reasons...instead of to accomplish our assignments.

Often when we get off our assignment...we get into petty disagreements (maybe not so petty)...we get into comparisons...competitions, etc.

Just stay focused on your assignment...watch God's favor help you complete your assignment.

Conclusion

BELOVED: As we prepare for the NEW YEAR...2025 (crazy)...we need to prepare ourselves for the greater...the better...for a better year.

A year of HIS FAVOR. Everyone else may have the hardest year ever...but we will overflow with his blessings.

We MUST do a couple things:

- 1.) Raise our expectations of favor...blessings.
- 2.) Prioritize building up our inner man. Get in the Word MORE...in prayer MORE.
- 3.) Don't just listen to faith messages...but walk in faith.
Do what faith does. Go ahead and do the uncomfortable.
- 4.) Walk in love.
Focus on others.
- 5.) Stay focused on your God-given assignments.
Have you let them go?