

# The Favor of God

## *Personal Breakthroughs*

2 Chronicles 15:1-7

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I hold an MP3 player. I purchased it so I could listen to some teaching and music. I also can view videos although I haven't figured that out yet. I like gadgets. I don't always know how to use them, but I like them. At one time, I felt that I was on the technological cutting edge; however, the older I get the more I feel left behind. I think I'm becoming like the Vietnamese woman who married an American soldier, moved here and one day while driving on a freeway, looked down at her car's odometer, saw it turn over to all zeros, pulled over, turned off the car and called for a tow. She thought the zeros meant the car had used up its life. I think I could do something like that with TiVo, iPods, GPS units, cell-phones and the like. The more technological gadgets that come out, the more foolish I feel.

Although we may consider our technology advanced, it is nothing compared to us. Truly, as the Bible in Psalm 139:14 says, "*We are fearfully and wonderfully made!*" We are a complex creation of body, soul and spirit. Medical research concentrates on the body. Psychotherapists research the soul. We speak of the spirit, but God created us all of that; and without the wisdom and favor of God, we just fiddle with us gadgets. We never realize our potential, often misuse what God has made us, and walk unnecessarily in brokenness.

Peter Horriben recently told the story about Jim. Jim was 51 years old when he sought prayer from Peter's ministry. At age 28, he suffered a farm accident. The orthopedic doctors

had done what they could, but for the next 23 years he could not raise his right hand above his head. Peter Horriben had learned from praying for people suffering trauma, that injuries are not limited to the body. People are not just broken in body; they also are wounded in their hearts. They are wounded in their soul and spirit where they think, feel, hope and believe.

When I was in third grade, my family and I were involved in a car accident that injured most of us. Although our physical injuries were treated, our spiritual and emotional injuries were not. I can now see that from the moment of that crash, I no longer trusted my father when he drove. When I saw Dad in the driver's seat, I grew anxious. As traffic grew heavy, so did my fear. Three years later, my fear increased profoundly. We were among the first at the scene of a fatal car accident. The noises, smell and sight of that carnage sickened me. From then on, when my father drove, I searched roadways and ditches for hazards. My heart was broken long after my body healed.

When Peter Horriben began praying with Jim who had the arm problem, he asked the Holy Spirit to show him what all needed to be healed. The Holy Spirit brought to Jim's mind an event that occurred when he was six or seven years old. Jim remembered climbing on hay bales that his father had loaded on a wagon. As they were stacked, he would climb higher. Finally, the moment came for him to get down, but he couldn't. He was too high and afraid of falling. His father called to him to leap into his arms. Three of my children used to leap from a perch into my arms until they got a little too big for me. However, when Jim jumped, his father pulled away. He crashed to the cement driveway below. His father said, "This is your first lesson - never trust your relatives." About that time, Jim developed asthma. When Jim forgave his father, and Peter's team prayed for him, he not only could move his arm, but the tightness across his chest was gone. For the first time in many years, he could drink air deeply into his lungs.

Jesus read a prophecy to describe his work and calling. It was the first few verses of Isaiah 61. This is the prophecy:

***The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...*** (Isaiah 61:1-2, NIV)

Jesus (in Luke 4) told his hometown worshipers that these words were fulfilled in their hearing. The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord rested on Jesus. “*To preach good news to the poor,*” what’s good news to the poor? Word of provision! “*To bind up the brokenhearted,*” God sent Jesus to people whose hearts are shattered, so the pieces could be retrieved, put back together, restored. “*To proclaim freedom for captives and release from dark prisons,*” Jesus speaks new life for the tormented, addicted, depressed or confused. “*To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor!*”

Now is the day of favor, the day of personal breakthroughs when these things happen! The Spirit that rested on Jesus in Nazareth rests on those who repent and believe in him today. Consequently, it is time for provision. It is time for healing. It is time for freedom and truth!

In 2 Chronicles we read about a king named Asa, who focused on seeking God, and made tough, costly decisions. Things turned sour. His army was hopelessly outnumbered, yet God gave them stunning victory. After they returned from battle, a prophet spoke these words:

***The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them... God was troubling them with every kind of distress. But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.*** (2 Chronicles 15:2-4, 6-7; NIV)

God told Asa that he is ready to be found. When we stop seeking solutions beyond God and begin seeking them from God, he responds. He gives light. He gives understanding. The prophet told Asa to be strong, to not give up, that in time his efforts would be rewarded.

Only two verses later do we learn what began to unfold:

***Large numbers had come over to him (Asa) from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. (2 Chronicles 15:9, NIV)***

When people saw that Asa had favor with God, that God answered his prayers, that his people were blessed and protected, they joined him because they wanted God's favor for their lives. They didn't come, however, until they understood what was unfolding.

Today, do you understand what is unfolding? Do you realize that the most serious injuries are shattered-hearts? We lose pieces of our heart that believed, hoped, trusted and understood. When you suffer a broken-heart, events that others take in stride, as part of their learning, devastate you. Delays become periods of hopelessness rather than times of anticipation and preparation. Now, both individuals and churches suffer from traumatized hearts. Therefore, individuals and congregations need Jesus to bind up their broken-hearts.

When the day of favor came in Asa's time, God gave the people understanding through a priest and the law. When Jesus came on the scene, he didn't just zap people. He proclaimed favor so that people could understand and receive it. This day of God's favor is the day of personal breakthroughs. It is to be proclaimed so that you can understand it and receive.

I've got good news. Have you been traumatized by divorce, bereavement, betrayal, injury, illness? Have you been hurt by church dissension or division? Are pieces missing from a heart that once was hopeful, joyful, confident and peaceful? The kingdom of darkness is a present reality, but so is this day of favor. Can you believe that God wants you (us) well?