

Unleashing the Miraculous—Growing in Favor

9/10/17

I. God's Favor unleashes the Miraculous

1. There is a difference between God's love and Favor.
2. God's love is constant and the same. We will never have more or less. His love is perfect and complete. You cannot earn more of God's love, but you can grow in God's favor. Jesus although perfect grew in favor.
3. Favor is initially given as a gift but is increased by stewardship and proper use. Good steward of Favor—
4. It is the year of God's Favor and He desires to do the miraculous today.

Action Steps

1. Sacrifice—Earnestly Seek the Lord—Daniel 10

- i. It is a sacrifice to earnestly seek something out.
- ii. Daniel gave up the highly favored and became highly favored.
- iii. Sacrifice—Offer up God our best—Abel (This is not a part way game)

2. Faithfulness—

- i. God gives Favor to those who seek to use the Favor for it's intended purpose—to be a blessing.
- ii. Daniel was praying for the Nation of Israel. He was seeking to be a blessing of others.
- iii. Are we going to be faithful with the blessings He has given us.

3. Obedience

- i. Mary was obedient and said Lord let it be to me even though she didn't understand how she was going to give birth.
- ii. Daniel 9—seeking the favor of the Lord through obedience
- iii. Leviticus 26:1-12
- iv. Moses—Aaron and Her held up Moses' hands. Physical obedience brings a spiritual release.
- v. It doesn't do me much good to never tell my family I love them but to simply feel love for them in my heart. I need to show the love by my words and actions.
- vi. Physical obedience has a spiritual effect.

Manuscript—Growing in Favor

Good morning. Read with me **Luke 4:18-19**. Jesus ushered in a new era—the age of God’s favor. The sick were healed, the blind saw, prisoners and the oppressed were set free, and good news to the poor. Jesus was unleashing the miraculous and ushering in heaven on earth. How awesome is this! We are have studying for the past few weeks on how to unleash the miraculous so that we too can co-labor with Christ and usher in the kingdom of heaven here on earth. And we desperately need it for the times are urgent. Today I want to speak with you about growing in God’s favor. We read that it is the year of God’s favor and it still is the time of God’s favor. In the birth account of Jesus we read in Luke 1 that the angel Gabriel goes to Mary and gave her the message that she was highly favored and that she would give birth to Jesus even though she was still a virgin. I would say that is unleashing the miraculous and literally ushering in heaven on earth! But here is what I want to share with you. While it is true that God loves everyone the same and that God shows no favoritism, in the sense that He loves all people the same and His love never changes. But there is a difference between His love and favor. God’s love is constant and will never decrease or increase. You can never have more or less. But lets be honest, not everyone has the same amount of favor from the Lord. I believe we are all given the gift of favor from God but not all of us have the same amount. And there is a reason for that. Favor comes with proper stewardship of the gift. According to God’s purpose He has given different favor to people. For instance, some people have God’s favor to earn money or to make people feel comfortable. These are gifts and the favor of God. Again, while you can never earn more of God’s love, we can and should grow in God’s favor. We read in scripture, in **Luke 2:52**, that Jesus Himself grew in wisdom and stature and in “Favor” with God and man. Thus even though God the Father loved Jesus, and Jesus was God and perfect, He still grew in favor with the Father. He ended His ministry with more favor than He began. If Jesus grew in favor then should we not seek to grow in God’s favor too? After all it is the favor of God that helps us operate in the supernatural and usher in the kingdom of God. For instance, God loved His people the Israelites, all of them, but He chose to use Mary to usher in the kingdom because of His favor. This is a difficult concept to grasp because we want God to be fair and He is. For we are going to see that even favor from God is a result of love for all people. That being said, I can’t speak for everyone, but I long for more of God’s favor. I long to be part of God’s plan in unleashing the miraculous and ushering in heaven here on earth. The cool thing about favor is that it is initially given as a gift with a purpose but like all things in heaven, it is increased by stewardship and proper use. I believe God has given us all a measure of favor but it is increased by good stewardship. Does that make sense? So I want to explore how we can grow in favor that we may unleash the miraculous. For it is the year of God’s favor and He is still ushering in heaven here on earth today.

To begin with I want look at a passage in the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel began in captivity. Due to sin God allowed the Israelites to be brought into captivity by the Babylonians and then later the Babylonians were defeated by Persia. So, Daniel began being a captive to the king of Babylon but then was under the king of Persia. Today I want to look specifically at Daniel 10. Read with me **Daniel 10:1-21**. Wow!

That is radical passage. It blows my mind and it is full of tons of awesome truths so lets break it down.

To begin with we read that Daniel was mourning and had been doing so for three weeks. The reason he was mourning is generally believed because Daniel had heard that the rebuilding of God's temple had come under opposition and many of the Jews refused to leave Persia because they liked the life they had developed Persia better than what God was offering to build them. Sounds familiar doesn't it? How often today do we face opposition both from without and within? So Daniel was mourning for three weeks. And he ate what we read no choice food. Then he receives a vision and a glorious angel appears to him and addresses him as highly esteemed, or as some translations state, greatly desired, precious to God, favored. The awesome thing about this passage is we get a better understanding of the spiritual realm and why God highly favored Daniel. Remember God loves all people, especially His children. But not everyone is highly esteemed. But all people can be if they learn how to grow in favor.

The first thing we read is that Daniel is fasting and desperately seeking out God, not eating any choice foods or wine. Now regarding fasting, it is important to understand that fasting is not a bargaining chip or a hunger strike that we do in order to get our way. It is really act of love, where we are willing letting go of earthly pleasures in order to seek out and commune with God. We are basically saying I am going to give up something to spend more time seeking out and focusing and praying to the Lord. For Daniel he decided to give up choice food and wine. Now here is the cool thing that highlights growing in favor. The word for "choice" or "desirable" is the exact same Hebrew word in Daniel 10:11 where it states you who are highly esteemed, or greatly desired, favorable. Do you see the connection? What scripture is saying is that Daniel, the one who gave up the "greatly desired/choice" became that which God greatly desires. How awesome is that. Daniel ate no favorable or desirable food and became a man greatly desired/favored by God. Here is the point. If we want to grow in favor with God then we need to earnestly desire and seek out God. Daniel was laying down that which he desired and he became desired. We read the same thing about Moses in Hebrews 11:24, that he refused the riches of Egypt to seek out God. Or Abel in Genesis...we read that Abel brought the first and best portion of his wealth and God looked upon this with favor. God is longing for people who are desperately seeking Him out. We often miss out on God's favor and unleashing the miraculous because we are not desperately seeking out God.

Think of king David. He is probably the most favored/highly esteemed by God, apart from Jesus. Who else has the privilege to have the Son of God declare that He is a Son of David? Did you ever consider why Jesus Himself refers to Himself as the Son of David. He did not say the Son of Abraham or Moses, or anyone else—just the Son of David. The same David who was a murderer and a cheater is the one who God bestowed the greatest honor. Why—because he was a man after God's own heart like none other. David longed for God. He was far from perfect, but despite all of his failures and shortcomings no one else longed for God like David. He was overwhelmed with love for God. He danced and worshiped God with all of his heart—he held nothing back. This is why Jesus is referred to the Son of David. Because Jesus Himself held nothing back from God the Father. Jesus was completely in love and committed to His Father. In fact, when we read in Luke 2:52 that Jesus grew in favor the context was when Jesus was a

boy and was seeking out the Father in His house. Jesus said I have to be about my Father's business. And this is how we are to be. God loves us with all that He has. His love is perfect. But if we want to deepen our relationship with God and His favor then we too need to lay it all down and eagerly seek out and worship our Lord. We cannot simply go to church on Sunday or pray for 15 minutes a day, listing off our needs and expect to deepen our relationship with God and grow in favor. God is telling us to desperately seek Him out and step out on faith and we are lukewarm in our response. Favor begins and grows—through relationship. God seeks us all out and to begin that relationship and continues to knock upon our hearts, but our relationship will not deepen and grow in favor unless we too are earnestly seeking Him out. Daniel, in the midst of the a difficult time, did not seek to go to the king, although he could, rather he decided to deny himself and give up that which is greatly desired and he himself became greatly desired. This is a picture of unusual and increase favor. I love it!

In the story of Daniel we not only see a man desperately seeking out God but a man with the right motive. Daniel was not simply seeking out God for his own benefit, but was seeking out God on behalf of his people. He was burdened by the plight and state of his people. Remember God loves us all. But He chooses to use (which is to give favor) to those who sacrificially and desperately seek Him out, but even that favor is meant to be a blessing to others. God did not give that divine revelation for Daniel only but to encourage the Nation of Israel. Think of Mary. She was highly favored by God, so much so that she got to give birth to the Savior. But the birth of Savior was not just meant to bless Mary, but to be a blessing to the whole world. Do you see what I am saying? God is looking for people who will be faithful to Him and with His favor. God grants greater favor to those who seek to use the favor for its intended purpose—to be a blessing to others. Some of you have been given favor to make a lot of money, but are you using it to bless others? Some of you have been given favor to draw people unto you and be a leader, but are you using it to draw others to Christ? If we are to maintain and grow in our favor we need to recognize that our favor has been given to bless others.

So here is a picture of Daniel feeling the heaviness and burden of his nation in bondage and determines to set aside all that pleases him to seek the Lord. Daniel said I am going to set aside all that which is desirable and he takes three weeks to fast and pray for the purpose to bless the people of God. So the real question for us today if we are seeking to grow in favor with God...is are we going to be faithful with the blessings God has already given us? For remember, to those who much has been given, much is expected. And to those who are faithful with little He will give more.

Okay, I want to share one last crucial way we can grow in favor to usher in the Kingdom of God. But before I do that I have to mention the cool revelation we see here regarding the spiritual realm...specifically the battle of the principalities and angels. We read in Hebrews 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits to those who will inherit salvation. Honestly, I have not taught on angels much at all. It is certainly foolish to worship angels but I am learning that it is also foolish to ignore them. Everything finds its purpose in God. That includes the angels. As we seek to usher in the Kingdom of God here on earth, we need to learn that what we do here effects what happens in the unseen realm and thus we have a part to play and a significant part. Daniel was eagerly praying to God and God heard Daniel and sent his angel to answer Daniel's prayer. But we read that the Prince of Persia, which is a demon (a fallen angel) was preventing God's

angel from coming. Daniel continues to pray and eventually Michael the Arch Angel is released and the messenger is able to get to Daniel. And then we read in **Daniel 10:20-21** that the angel was going to leave Daniel and go back to fight against the prince of Persia again and that the prince of Greece is going to come to where Daniel is. Isn't this crazy. There is whole unseen battle going on that we have no idea. This is a powerful point. We are called to persist in prayer because not only do we change in the process but we change the spiritual environment/realm as well. I don't want us to go around and point our fingers at everything and attribute all things to demons and Satan but we must learn to do battle and recognize there is a battle going on that effects us and the spiritual realm. Many of us, including myself, have had attitudes that I don't want to work with angels just God. In reality, we need to learn that we want what God wants. Amen. As we seek to unleash the miraculous we are not only partnering with the Holy Spirit but angels as well.

You see the same principle in 2 Kings 6:16. This is the account where Elisha and his servant were being surrounded by their enemies and the servant begins to freak out. And Elisha says don't worry, greater are those who are with us than those who are against us. Then Elisha prays and asks for his servant's eyes to be opened up and he sees a whole legion of angels surrounding them and protecting them. Brothers and sisters, we are in a real spiritual battle and we really need to learn how to do warfare on a greater level for the end is getting closer as each day passes. **Ephesians 6:10-12** states, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

I think it is really cool that we are partnering with the angels. God likes using everything He has made. He likes using you and me. He loves partnership. If He didn't like co-labor then He would not have given us the commission with the gospel. He would not have made angels. He could have easily given the message Himself but He chose to use an angel. It is true that God could easily destroy Satan and his fallen demons. Satan is a created being and God is not threatened by Satan or his demons. The Devil is a pawn on the chess board and He could easily demolish Him. But He is accomplishing a greater and deeper purpose with His creation. God has always chosen to use His creation for His glory. The Apostle Paul states something real powerful in Hebrews 6:1-3. He admonishes us to leave the elementary teachings of issues such as salvation and faith and move forward to maturity. Again, this is why we need daily revelation of God, our daily bread, so that we can grow to maturity. Okay, I am done with my bunny trail, back to growing in favor.

The last point I want to share is that we grow in favor with God also through obedience. We started out with looking at how Mary was considered highly favored by God. But if you are familiar with the passage, once Gabriel tells Mary that she is going to have a son and He will be the savior of the world she asks, "how can this be?" His answer was the Holy Spirit will come upon you. Now I am not sure but I wonder if Mary even understood what that meant. But what I am sure about is her response. She says in **Luke 1:38**, "I am the Lord's servant may your word be fulfilled." Mary may or may not have understood but she was obedient. It was her obedient heart that grew her favor with God and unleashed the miraculous. We see the same principle in Daniel. Turn with me

to one chapter earlier in **Daniel 9:13-14** we read, “Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. ¹⁴The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.” Here we read that they did not seek God’s favor and they did not receive it because they would not obey Him. We not only need to eagerly seek the favor of God but we grow in favor through obedience. I have mentioned this before but physical obedience unleashes spiritual blessings/release. While our disobedience does not hinder God’s love for us it does hinder His favor. If we want to experience more of God’s favor then we need to be faithful and obedient to what He called us to do.

Scripture for Growing in God's Favor

Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Luke 2:52

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.