



You will have heard me many times speak about the importance of praying for God's favour in the various things we do, whether that be during a service, doing outreach, in a ministry, as I go into school, do the shopping, go walking... in fact in every area of our lives. **CHRISTIANS ARE ROOTED IN GOD'S FAVOUR.** In the Bible the word 'favour' occurs 158 times & frequently in the most unlikely of situations, where we see that God's favour often shines brightest in the darkest of days.

Here are 3 Bible characters enjoying favour, followed by 3 aspects of, and then 3 outcomes of God's favour.

Noah lived in an exceptionally evil generation. The LORD was about to pour out His judgment on mankind but Genesis 6:8 says that "*Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD*". Whatever is happening around us; lockdown, covid, other health challenges, financial problems, we can still experience God's favour.

Esther lived in extremely dangerous times, with powerful men like Haman

plotting to exterminate the Jews, yet Esther 2:15 says that "*Esther found favour in the eyes of all who saw her*". Shortly after that same favour enabled her to successfully petition the king & save her Jewish people. As Esther experienced, so too God wants to give us His favour "*for such a time as this*" (4:14) so that we can positively impact folk around us.

Daniel was taken captive into exile by the Babylonians. It would have been easy for him to think that God had abandoned him. Instead as Daniel chose to remain faithful to God by not defiling himself with inappropriate food & wine, so Daniel 1:9 tells us, "*God had caused the official to show favour & compassion to Daniel*".

The Bible teaches and we should realize and remember that:

1. Favour comes from God. Proverbs 8:35 "*those who find wisdom find life & receive favour from the LORD*". Job acknowledged (10:12) God "*has granted me life & favour*".

2. Favour is in the sight of God. The example above with Noah finding favour in God's eyes, and 1 Sam 2:26 records that the young Samuel "*continued to grow... in favour with the LORD*".

3. Favour is in the sight of others. Both Esther & Daniel above are examples, as is Moses leading the people out of Egypt when God said (Exodus 3:21a), "*And I will give you favour in the sight of the Egyptians*." God changes people's minds & hearts & can make our enemies look on us with favour

From the Bible we see that:

1. God's favour provides. As we enjoy God's favour we find that there is provision for us, even in the midst of our enemies. Exodus 3:21b continues "*...so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed*," and then in Ex 12:3 "*And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians & they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth*." This is not some sort of prosperity gospel but the awareness that God can supernaturally meet not our wants but our needs.

2. God's favour protects. Psalm 5:12 "*LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favour as with a shield*." It may be a difficult truth, but God rarely removes us immediately from difficult situations, and in fact for example with Daniel, he spent the rest of his life safely in exile. With the Israelites leaving Egypt the same plagues that turned things round for them, the flies, hailstones, frogs, etc., could not harm God's people but were actually part of their deliverance. Some people have a lifetime of health issues or family challenges or other significant obstacles, yet through their lives they know God's favour & protection.

3. God's favour promises. Whatever the situation God has a plan, and when the time is right as He moves on our behalf, doors are opened, mountains are moved, things we thought impossible start to happen. No matter how we may have failed Him, when we pray for His forgiveness & favour, He responds. Psalm 30:5 "*His anger lasts only a moment, but His favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning*."

There is hope for our futures when we like Moses say to God (Ex 33:13) "TEACH ME YOUR WAYS SO I MAY KNOW YOU & CONTINUE TO FIND FAVOUR WITH YOU".



Following our very successful February **CHURCH AND COMMUNITY ZOOM PRAYER TIME** called **BEACON OF LIGHT**, our next one is this Thursday.

A different person each month from outside the TCF family but who works in our community will briefly tell us something about what they do, what challenges they are currently facing & what we can pray for.

This Thursday local councillor Tommy Anderson who is involved in policing & neighbour residents' issues will attend & again anyone can ask him questions about what is happening in our community, positive and negative.

This is also an opportunity for us as church family together to prayerfully focus on our own needs and challenges, and for whatever the future may hold for us.

IF YOU CAN, PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND THIS

A PRAYER FOR MOTHERS DAY

(BY PETE GRIEG)

*Today we pray for mothers to know
love and joy.
And for orphans, comfort.
For not-yet mothers, hope.
For single mothers, grace.
And for those who are lonely, family.*

*We pray grace today
For the mothers of prodigals,
For those who've lost children, and
For those who don't know where their
children are.*

*May the embrace of grace displace
shame*

*For mums in prison,
For those who can't feed a baby,
For those who miscarried,
And those who had an abortion.*

*May those who never held their own
child,*

*For whom today is sadder than it is
happy,*

*Know the joy of parenting sons and
daughters*

Within the family of God.

*For 'as a mother comforts her child,'
says the Lord, 'so will I comfort you;
and you will be comforted.' (Isaiah
66:13)*

