

## Growing In Favour

### Introduction

- Ablaze launch event tonight
- 7 days into our 21 days of prayer and fasting
- A time to turn down the volume of the world around us and hear God more clearly
- Still not too late to join in

### 1. Welcome to 2018 A year of the Lord's Favour

"Sing, barren woman, who has never had a baby. Fill the air with song, you who've never experienced childbirth! You're ending up with far more children than all those childbearing women." God says so! "Clear lots of ground for your tents! Make your tents large. Spread out! Think big! Use plenty of rope, drive the tent pegs deep. You're going to need lots of elbow room for your growing family. You're going to take over whole nations; you're going to resettle abandoned cities. Don't be afraid---you're not going to be embarrassed. Don't hold back---you're not going to come up short. You'll forget all about the humiliations of your youth, and the indignities of being a widow will fade from memory. For your Maker is your bridegroom, his name, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! Your Redeemer is The Holy of Israel, known as God of the whole earth. **Isaiah 54:1-5 MSG**

The Spirit of God, the Master, is on me because God anointed me. He sent me to preach good news to the poor, heal the heartbroken, Announce freedom to all captives, pardon all prisoners. God sent me to announce the year of his grace--- a celebration of God's destruction of our enemies--- and to comfort all who mourn, To care for the needs of all who mourn in Zion, give them bouquets of roses instead of ashes, Messages of joy instead of news of doom, a praising heart instead of a languid spirit. Rename them "Oaks of Righteousness" planted by God to display his glory. They'll rebuild the old ruins, raise a new city out of the wreckage. They'll start over on the ruined cities, take the rubble left behind and make it new. You'll hire outsiders to herd your flocks and foreigners to work your fields, But you'll have the title "Priests of God," honoured as ministers of our God. You'll feast on the bounty of nations, you'll bask in their glory. Because you got a double dose of trouble and more than your share of contempt, Your inheritance in the land will be doubled and your joy go on forever. **Isaiah 61:1-7 MSG**

"Look at the nations and watch---and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.

### **Habakkuk 1:5**

### Define Favour

- It's undeserved, unmerited help, kindness ... Favour
- It's God Grace given to us in Christ Jesus
- It's God's preferential Treatment

*Favour enables us to do what we could not do in our own strength or resources to bring about God's divine purposes upon the earth.*

- It's the Favour of God that enables us to have healthy lives, healthy marriages and shape our communities into safe places of hope and light.
- It is the favour of the Lord that enables us to grow people, raise leaders establish new congregations even build buildings, to grow the prayer culture and expand the mission of God.

### **Get Ready For:**

- New Beginnings or a New Chapter
- Reset and Go again - Fresh Start
- Beauty for Ashes
- Joy for mourning
- A year of praise
- Breakthrough in the places you contended
- It's winter into Spring

See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. [12] Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. [13] The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me." **Song of Songs 2:11-13**

### **Purpose of the Favour**

- Joseph - But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. **Genesis 45:7**
- Esther - For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" **Esther 4:14**
- Psalm 67 - Bless us so that the nations may praise and glorify you.
- Early Church - Enjoyed the Favour of the Lord and people were added to them daily

*The favour upon an individual is not about the individual but about what the Lord is doing through them to reach and touch others!! Favour is rarely about the person who is experiencing favour!*

## **2. Our Heavenly Father Is Good**

He is love - Slow to anger abounding in love

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. **Psalm 145:8**

He is forgiving

You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

**Psalm 86:5**

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. **Isaiah 43:25**

#### He is merciful

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions---it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:4-5

#### He is with us

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." **Zephaniah 3:17**

#### He Gives Good Gifts

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!  
**Matthew 7:11**

### **3. Make the Lord your Highest Delight**

#### Jesus

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" [50] But they did not understand what he was saying to them. [51] Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. [52] And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men. **Luke 2:49-52**

#### David

The Lord is my light and my salvation---whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life---of whom shall I be afraid? [2] When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. [3] Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. [4] One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. **Psalms 27:1-4**

The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. **Psalms 119:72**

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **Psalms 119:103**

#### Danced his way into Jerusalem

David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, [15] while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets. [20] When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has

distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" [21] David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord's people Israel---I will celebrate before the Lord. [22] I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honour." [23] And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death. **2 Samuel 6:14-15,20-23**

- David lived in the favour of God - from shepherd boy to King
- A warrior
- A psalmist and song writer
- 24hr prayer and worship in Davids tent for more than 30 years

After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' **Acts 13:22**

#### You

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. [5] Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: **Psalm 37:4-5**

- Rejoice in the Lord always - Philippians 4:4
- Delight yourself in the Lord - Psalm 37:4
- Be glad in the Lord - Psalm 32:11
- In your presence there is fullness of joy - Psalm 16:11
- The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup - Psalm 16:5
- As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God - Psalm 42:1-2
- I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land - Psalm 143:6
- We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation - Romans 5:11

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. **Psalm 91:14**

#### **4. Love the least, the lost and the last**

Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God. **Proverbs 14:31**

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? [7] Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter---when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? [8] Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. **Isaiah 58:6-8**

Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble. **Psalm 41:1**

- Transforming our communities through our life groups - Lifestyle not projects
- CAP Release group begins this coming week - pray and get involved

### **Conclusion**

- It is the year of the Lords Favour
- Our Heavenly Father is good
- You can grow in Favour by delighting in God
- You can grow in Favour by loving and serving the least, the last and the lost