

Coffee with Phil. 33. Walking in Favour

Introduction.

G'day and welcome to Coffee with Phil. My name's Phil and it's a pleasure to be with you today on this episode, I'm enjoying walking with you, and I say that because I've heard from several of you listeners that you're bingeing episodes to catch up with the journey, to hear what's happening in my life, but also it's my hope that you wouldn't just understand or listen to what's happening in my life, but my true desire is that as I share my journey with you, and what I'm learning, and what I'm unpacking, that you too would then hold up my stories, almost like a mirror, or an opportunity to look at your own life, and look some of it might be relevant to the season for you, and some of it just might actually be relevant to a future season.

There's a couple of things in my life that I've realised are necessary now, but I realised that I learned them a long time ago, so I've been going back and looking in the archives of some of the things that I've learned or studied, or there's a couple of key messages or themes or books that I know that if I go back to, I'll be able to get stuff out of it. Really, that's why we put these podcasts up for you to be able to access when it works for you, or when you need it.

Today's topic, as I sit here with my afternoon coffee looking at the cloudy sky outside, today's topic is walking in favour, and it is not my intention to preach at you today, although that's always a risk for someone like me, but look, as I unpack scripture, I'm sorry, I gotta confess, I'm a junkie. I get into my reading, or I feel like God's asked me to open a certain chapter, and I just dive in, and I've got to confess I love it, I'm addicted to it, can't get enough of it, but I also find that as I open it, I unpack things, and so I'm gonna share that with you today, with regards to walking in favour, and I'm gonna tell a story as part of it in the second-half, because there is a relevant application for me, but of course I want you to find the relevant application for you. So let's see how that goes for you.

By way of introduction, I wanna think about our theme for our time together today and what does it mean to walk in favour. This is a biblical phrase, it comes out of Deuteronomy 28. So, if we were sitting in a church service, or I was pointing you to a sermon on a YouTube channel, then this would be the title of the sermon, and the text that we would be looking at would be Deuteronomy 28, don't worry, you don't need to turn there while you're driving or walking, pounding the pavement, you in fact can trust that I will point you to it, and I would suggest the next time you sit down with the Bible that you open Deuteronomy 28 and you read the whole chapter. I am of course I'm going to talk about the first half of the chapter and only reference the second-half.

Today, what does it mean to walk in favour? This is a powerful chapter for me, I remember, probably 20 years ago now, I can pull out the Bible that I was reading in those days, it was one that my mum gave me. It's a life application Bible with a new international version translation, and on the page next to Deuteronomy 28, I've got brackets and I've written down some key thoughts from what I felt the Lord gave me as a mandate, for a motivation, for what I was doing at the time, in that season of my life, and in fact, it's become a theme for every facet of life, because no matter what I do now, I choose to walk in favour.

Now I've got to put something into the introduction because some of you know the back story of my life, or the behind the scenes stories, and you might think, well, it doesn't look like he always walks in favour, and I've got to confess to you, it doesn't always feel like I'm walking in favour. It doesn't look like it if I look again at the mistakes, or the challenges the opposition, or the failures, what I would define as failures. It doesn't always look or feel like I'm walking in favour, but let me tell you, I'm walking in favour, the question is, how do I process what life feels like or looks like, and I want you to see today that favour is always above our circumstances. The favour we walk in as children of God, covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, fully redeemed, righteous, standing before God, clean, white as snow, because of Jesus and the finished work of his cross. We walk in favour and that is far above the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

The most common example of this is the story of Job. Job was a man who was rich, he was highly esteemed and respected. We might even say there was none on Earth as favoured as him, and yet the devil approaches God on his throne and says, 'hey, this guy really only loves you because you protect him. You have a hedge of protection around him. I can't get at him, and I reckon', says the devil 'If I test him, he's going to fail'. This is remarkable to me. God says 'well, go and do your best', he says. 'You're wrong'. Because God knew what Job's heart was like, and this seems to me that Job was always favoured, even though his circumstances didn't look like it.

While Job lost his children, he was still favoured by God. While Job lost his entire farming wealth, he was still favoured by God. Even when Job is sitting in scabs being harangued by his wife, he was still walking in favour. So let me say this very clearly out front, favour is always above our circumstances and that's the mindset that I'm taking in this season where I'm facing challenges, adversity, opposition. I'm working through some of the past hurts and finding the healing that God's got for me. I want to enlarge my soul through the grief and the loss that God's teaching me to live a different life and in that I've got to understand that I'm walking in favour. It doesn't matter what I feel like. I'm walking in favour.

So here's the so what for you and for me, and the perspective that we really would be would be favourable for us to take, and that is, will I always be able to say God is good above all circumstances, and in every season.

Deuteronomy 28.

So I'll plant then as a thought for you as we move into the first part of this podcast, I really just wanna just do a highly overview of zoom through the first part of Deuteronomy 28, and this is a game of two halves, it's about the two sides of life. It talks about the conditional favour of God. It talks about the conditional favour of God in the midst of, and underneath the unconditional love of God. So let me say God loves you no matter who you are, no matter what you do, no matter where you are, but his favour is conditional and it's based on the fact that it says 'if you obey me, here are the blessings. If you don't obey me, here are the curses.' Those are the two sides of life, and I want to talk about the blessing of God, because that's what it means to walk and favour.

We're covered by the blood of Jesus. We are favoured, highly favoured sons of God who sit in the midst of his glory, and the inheritance that we have today on Earth in preparation for eternity, that's what it means to walk in favour, and I want you to notice this, which comes first in this section? And it's obvious because at the first half of this chapter is all about the blessings of God. What does it mean for me? I feel like the Lord is wanting to do for me is to create this mindset, this paradigm, this belief system. Like an expectation that blessing is what he wants for me, it comes first. He's like 'I designed you, I created you. I called you. I prepared for you to walk in favour', that is normal when we live our life and faith with God.

The second-half of the chapter is about, well, the other side of that is the curse of life and I really don't want to get into theology of what curses are, so let's just keep our focus on the intent, for God, is that we would walk in favour. There are two halves to this, and I want to talk about the second-half later. We'll talk about that in a later section today.

But let me just give you a snapshot of what I'm trying to do to condition my mindset to walk in the favour of God and I'm just going to go through this. There's twelve things in the first half of this chapter that we should expect God's blessing, and you will be blessed, if you will be blessed in you will see. So look at this, in this I'm just going to freedom God says, this is my paraphrasing, I've just written down twelve things from the verses of Deuteronomy 28.

So, starting at verse one, 'If you fully obey the Lord, follow his commands, the Lord will set you high above all the nations of the Earth. You will be blessed in the country and the best in the city.' So every location, God will bless you, he then says 'the fruit of your womb, and your crops, and your family. So you can' secondly, number two 'your home will be blessed'. Number three your 'basket your pantry will be blessed'. Four, 'coming in and going out' your travel will be blessed, wherever you go will be blessed, and that includes even praying for a car park. 'Your enemy will rise up, will then be defeated', so your opposition, number five, any opposition that you face, you will be blessed in the midst of that opposition, and that's an interesting thought to have. 'Your work would be blessed'. The things that you put your hands to, number six, your work will be blessed by God. Number seven you will be set above others, you will be called the privileged people of faith, now, that's my translation of what's happening in this first, privileged people of faith, think about that, you're privileged as people of faith. So you can work that out for yourself. Number eight, 'you're going to stand out and stand above others', you should expect to get promoted. You should expect to be invited in. You should expect to see doors open, because you stand out and you stand above others. Number nine you will be prosperous, the Lord will grant you abundant prosperity, it says in verse eleven so you should have more than enough than you need for living and and then it says, 'you will lend to many nations'. So you will have excess that will allow you to give your surplus to others to be, so you're gonna have prosperity, but it's going to go out to other people, that's number ten. And then number eleven is you will have a continuous supply, there's gonna be a flow that comes in, you'll have an open heaven above you, a storehouse, rain on your land in the season to bless everything, there's a flow of what God has for you. And finally number twelve, 'you will be the head and not the tail'. You will lead others. You will lead others in the way that you live.

Oh my gosh, that's a huge list, twelve things there, it would be worthwhile getting the transcription from the podcast and catching what those twelve things are, we'll make sure they are in the transcript for you, in the notes for you to have access to, cause it'd be worth thinking about that.

I got a little bit tired after that, I had to go and get myself a cup of tea, a lovely cup of French Earl Grey, thanks to our sponsors for supplying that to me. Anyway, look, what I wanted to tell you about, this head and not the tail thing that was the real key thing that drew me to share this with you, 'cause the Lord said to me recently something specific about reminding me of this verse 'that you will be the head and not the tail'. 'I've called you to be the head and not the tail, you to go first, you to go forward, you to lead others', and that was really, I'm just a stirring in me a reminder in me, in a, I suppose the Lord's like giving me a kick up the bum, to be honest. Pardon my expression.

But I looked into this head and not the tail and what it is, I don't know, I don't know actually if you're actually interested in this at all, but this was really interesting to me, it's an oriental phrase, it's you know, these are Middle Eastern writers that are capturing this word of God that Moses is writing the book of Deuteronomy. He's sharing what God said to his people, and so he's using their language and this is an oriental expression that says this, listen to this 'it indicates the possession of independent power, great dignity, and acknowledged excellence', well, I'd like to propose that that's for me, and I'd like to propose it's for you, that you would be known, that you are someone who possesses independent power, great dignity, and acknowledged excellence, and I'm going to leave that for you to chew on while I transition to this second section of the podcast 'cause I wanna talk about the how.

It's all very well for me to be thinking to myself 'I'm gonna live a life of favour. I'm gonna walk in favour, I'm gonna be the head and not the tail', but I did say to you that this is conditional favour, and therefore the Lord says 'when you, as a result of you making a choice, you will live this kind of lifestyle.' What does that look like? While verse one says very simply, 'if you fully obey the Lord your God, and carefully follow all of his commands'. Now, this sounds like a burdensome load for you, but let me just simplify it for you. But first, before I do that, I just love to bring back in the story of King Saul, who I call, he's a bit of an egg by the time you get to 1 Samuel 15. He goes off on his own, does what he thinks he needs to do, and as a result of that, he makes a grievous mistake, and the prophet Samuel comes to him and says, 'what is this bleating of sheep that I hear in the background', and Saul tries to make excuses, blah blah blah, bleep bleep bleep, pardon the pun. And then Samuel the Prophet says this, and you would have heard before. He said 'to obey is better than sacrifice', to obey is better than sacrifice, and so this idea that we would fully obey the Lord our God and carefully follow his commands, obedience is far better than the things we might bring, or the things we might do. So a heart that is attentive to God, is really what he desires.

How To Walk In Favour. And I'm going to give you two simple keys that I'm trying to implement into my life. The first one that says 'If you fully obey'. So what that means key number one is complete obedience, no room for error, no room for taking risks, no gaps that we might allow the wrong things to slip in, and here's one, no sliding scale, which kind of means I can be one thing for one person, but something different for someone else. No sliding scale, complete obedience. I feel God's calling me back to a place where I would have no shadows, no wiggle room, no error. If you fully obey the Lord your God, and I've shared with you before, my confession is, there is no way I can do that on my own. I'm not clever enough, smart enough. I'm not good enough. I can only do it when he helps me. So, key number one, fully obey means complete obedience.

Key number two, carefully follow, it says 'if you carefully follow his commands'. So what does that mean? It means to be diligent. It means to be attentive. It means to be focused, it means to be very clear on what you are following, which means you have to know the word of God. You've gotta be feeding on the word.

It's all good for you to be listening to me, bingeing on the podcast, telling you stories about my life. That's good, I'm glad that we're doing this life together. But if you're not making a priority of knowing the word of God, having a daily discipline of reading scripture and asking God to highlight it for you. Well, then you don't know what you're following. It's like you're blind. You're groping around in the dark. You're like, hey, I'm gonna be obedient, but you're not even being obedient to what God's given you.

So how can we walk in the conditional favour of God? We can fully obey. Making sure that we're working on our purity. We're working on living in the righteousness of Christ with the mind of Christ, and we're understanding what he's calling us into, and we're following it diligently and again, I don't think you're good enough to do that on your own, so perhaps what you can do is join me in a prayer where we say 'Lord Jesus, help me'. It's a common prayer, I pray.

When Opposition Comes.

I wanted to talk about, also just give you a story to talk about opposition, because, you know, at the beginning I said, you know, we're designed by God and called by God to walk in favour with God and it doesn't always look or feel like that, and we need to set our expectations above circumstances. I walk in favour because I'm a son or daughter of God. But, beyond that, we need to understand that our life doesn't always go the way we thought it would.

So, I wanted to ask this question. What is my attitude when opposition comes? I mean, look, I mean even in Deuteronomy 28 it says there, verse 7, the Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated, but look, the enemies will rise up against you, so you're going to get opposition you're going to have challenge. You're going to have some opposition or some adversity and look who on earth is sending me all these messages, stop spamming me, that's my son, there you go. Alright we better put him on silent.

But look at this. What is my attitude when opposition comes? Let me give you this phrase. This is what I'm trying to instill into me. If my expectation is to walk in favour, I will choose to walk through challenge. I'll say that to you again. If my expectation is to walk in favour, I will choose to walk through challenge.

Now, in the last several years, I was going to say in the last three years, I've had several building projects on the go, some personal, some relate to my work, and I've had challenges in every single one of those building projects. I've had unexpected challenges. I've had people rip me off. I've had people lie to me. I've had rules changed. I've had money disappear. Significant challenge, loss of sleep, loss of all sorts of, well let me just say I've been quite disappointed in several areas. And it would have been really easy for me to say, oh, this sucks, I'm not walking in favour, God's forgotten about me, woe is me, and have my little pity party. And look, I trust me, I've been tempted and I'm just thankful to the Lord for putting good friends around me that helped me pick myself up in those moments. But let me give you four questions that God has taught me to use so that I can choose to walk through challenge.

Question number one, what has the Lord hidden for me to discover in this, in the centre of this challenge? What has God hidden for me to discover? Because in every valley, in every challenge, in every adversity, God is revealing things to you. So God's revealing things to you.

But then second question, number two. What might God reveal in me? What is God revealing to me? And what is God revealing in me?

I spoke to you about emotions recently, and I learned in, what was it? last year or the year before? That the Lord, I read it in a book, the Lord uses emotions as signposts that point to things, and so what's the Lord pointing to? What's he revealing in me? Do I get angry? Do I react? Do I snap? Do I make statements that are not reasonable? What is God revealing in me in the midst of this challenge?

Question number three, what is God wanting to teach me? What is God wanting to teach me? This is a growth opportunity. 'Lord, would you help me to grow in this moment? What are you trying to teach me?'

And I can say in the last three years I've learned a lot about who God is and who I am, and that's refining my journey.

Finally question number four, as I choose to walk through the challenge, this has been one real recently, and the Lord said to me, you know, he took this question, how can I reveal his goodness to others who are around me, near me, or watching me? And in the latest building project I'm doing at work, we've got quite a few tradespeople that have been involved in the chat challenges, and I've gotta say it's a real temptation for me to lash out, to get aggressive, to get angry, to stomp around and throw my toys out of the cot in front of these guys, and yet, I've chosen to be calm, I've chosen to walk through it, I've chosen to be open in conversation I've chose to go and apologise when necessary, and to find solutions, to pray for solutions, and I can see a real opening up in some of them to what God's doing as part of our faith community.

And I want to close that with this. So this is an example of that, How can I reveal his goodness to others around me who are near or watching? and in Deuteronomy chapter 28, verse 10. Verse 9, 'the Lord will establish you as holy people', and then in verse 10 it says this, 'then all the peoples on Earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you'.

So what's happening? That people will see you. They will know you are called, meaning you are under the name of God, you are God's people. And then it says they will fear you. Now, what that means is not to be afraid in a negative sense, but they would stand in awe and wonder as they marvel at your journey, so here's my paraphrase, guys, when you're going through challenges, how can I reveal God's goodness to others around me? You want to respond in a way, you want God to show you things around you, to show things in you, and to teach you so that those people that are watching your challenging season, they will recognise that you walk in favour, they will see something of evidence of God in your life, that proves that you are God's child, and that will stand in awe at what God does in your story, and that's my testimony, and I'm saying it in faith because I believe I'm going to see it more and more.

What Does This Mean For You?

So, as I close, today's been a little bit instructional, but this is literally the journey I'm walking through every week, and you're welcome to sort of take bits and pieces of my story and seek to grow and apply them in your own life. But, as I close, I just want to offer this question. What does this mean for you? If I said to you 'God's called you to walk in favour'. What does it mean for how you choose to walk out your faith in God's promises?

So, if you're going to have faith in God's promises, you're going to have to make deliberate choices to walk that out, meaning practical. What do I do? What do I say? What do I think? How do I respond? And that becomes choices you make every day. So, I hope that God is conditioning your heart and your mind to believe that he's called you to walk in favour. To have expectation that you're going to walk in his favour in those twelve areas of your life. And as you walk in favour with God, your life would be a testimony and evidence that God is good and he's good all the time, even when it's raining, even when you're challenged, even when you're upset, and even when things go well, you are favoured of God, highly favoured, mighty, mighty person of God, you are highly favoured, and I just hope and pray that what I've shared with you today has encouraged you.

Hey, make sure you subscribe to the podcast. Then you catch the episodes we're dropping a new episode every week on channels that work for you. So that's on Spotify, on Apple, on Google, or wherever you get your podcasts, but also why don't you share this with a friend? Who do you know that really needs to be encouraged that God sees them, that God loves them, and that their circumstances do not limit or define what God is doing. But he is good. He is always good, and that his desire is that they would know that they walk in his favour. I'll leave that with you, and my prayer also goes with you, that you would know the ever loving presence of God in each and every one of your days. God bless you guys and I look forward to sharing again with you next week. Take care.