

God's Favor

(Luke 1:28-30)

- Introduction:
1. Surely, it should be our desire to find favor in the eyes of the Lord.
 2. There are several examples in Scripture in which men and women did find the Lord's favor.
 3. While we're looking at these examples, I want to also dispel a myth.
 - a. Why do we associate divine mercies with pleasure and ease?
 - b. God's mercies often come with hardships & difficulties.

I. God's Favor Upon Individuals

- A. (Genesis 6:8).
 1. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
 2. But note that this divine favor did not bring ease and pleasure, but rather hardship.
 - a. Build the ark.
 - b. Listen to daily ridicule.
 - c. Spend a year cooped up in a boat.
- B. (Luke 1:28-30).
 1. Mary found favor in the eyes of the Lord.
 2. But do you think that favor brought ease to Mary's life?
 - a. Image the scandal and rumors that surrounded her pregnancy.
 - b. Image how difficult it would be to maintain your reputation and defend your integrity.
- C. (Matthew 3:17)
 1. Jesus found favor in the eyes of the Lord.
 - a. (Isaiah 53:3) Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.
 - b. (Matthew 8:20) No home.
 - c. (Matthew 27) Jesus dies on a cross.

II. Why Would God Allow Hardship To Cross Our Path?

- A. Hardship can be good (Psalm 119:71).
- B. Hardship helps us to prioritize our lives (Matthew 6:33).
- C. Hardship helps us to build character (2 Peter 3:18).
- D. Hardship reminds us that this world is not our home (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).

- Conclusion:
1. May I encourage all of you to seek the favor of God, but don't be disillusioned, or doubt God's favor because you are called to suffer.
 2. Remember, if you are to follow Jesus, you must deny yourself, take up a cross, and follow him (Luke 9:23).