



Sermon: God's Wonderful Favour

Theme: Living in the favour of God (FOG)

Date: 18 July 2010 – Morning service

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Introduction

- At this time, God has been speaking to the leadership of this church regarding His favour. We feel compelled by the Spirit to make space for Him to fully release what is on His heart.
- Filled with excitement and godly expectation I invite you to join me on a journey over the coming weeks to discover more about His favour and the fullness of His purpose behind it.
- I trust that the acronym **FOG** (favour of God) will captivate your heart and your focus. But even more than this – may it become your experience! God wants us to live in the **FOG**!

Text: Psalm 30:5 (NIV)

'For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.'

Main points

1. The meaning of favour

- To *favour* means *to give special regard to someone, to treat with goodwill, to show exceptional kindness and love*. It is very important to know that it includes *acceptance* and *approval*.
- It simply means the one who is favoured is shown kindness and treated with a generosity and goodwill far beyond what would normally be expected. The question is, 'Is this truly God's heart towards me?'

2. Do you have favour with God?

- God's intention is to favour us. Psalm 30:5a in the NKJV says, 'For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life ...'
- Why would God favour us and want to bless us? Because of His character. He is loving and gracious. This is expressed through Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. Jesus paid with His life to remove our sins so that God's favour and blessing can flow freely to us again.
- In Jesus Christ the fullness of God's favour is released to us.

'All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.'

Ephesians 1:3 (NLT)

‘Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.’

Romans 5:2 (NLT)

- Even the blessing promised to Abraham becomes ours through Christ.

‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.’

Galatians 3:13-14 (NIV)

- The coming of Jesus and His death on the cross is the ultimate proof of God’s favour towards us. If you ever wonder or doubt God’s favour towards you, simply look at the Cross and you will be convinced.

3. Faith and favour

- When God speaks, we have two choices. We can believe and receive what He says or we can doubt and dissect it and miss His promises.
- This message on His favour brings us to such a choice again. We need to apply faith for favour to be released.
- Favour is an outflow of grace. It is God’s unmerited goodwill extended to us because of Christ. By faith we lay hold of the salvation freely offered to us through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is not too difficult to receive His favour in the same way. Everything we need or receive from God comes by faith. People of faith lay hold of God’s favour!
- Let me draw your attention to the important partnership between faith and words. Not just any words, but God’s words. In Romans 10:8 the Apostle Paul refers to the ‘word of faith’ and in verse 17 explains that faith comes by hearing the word of God. In turn, His Word must find expression through our mouths for the power of faith to be released. His Word must be welcomed in our hearts and be expressed through our mouths in order for it to bear fruit. The faith stirred in our hearts by God’s Word is expressed through our mouths. So, when God speaks favour over our lives, we must believe it in our hearts and also confess it. You need to believe and say, ‘I am favoured by God!’
- By faith we lay hold of salvation and by faith we lay hold of the favour God extends to us!

4. Smog or FOG? What will it be?

- Smog is the result of pollution – dirty air caused by a mixture of smoke and fog.

- In spiritual terms, smog is the devil's concoction of smearing, moaning, offense and guilt by which he tries to snuff the life out of us. The effect of this smog is confusion, doubt, fear and unbelief.
- In contrast to the enemies' smog, I believe God wants us to live in His favour. Give the smog a miss, live in the FOG. Smog suffocates, while fog nourishes.
- Let's get it clear in our minds – God's favour is for His people!

5. Thankfulness

- It is no secret that God favours a thankful heart. In fact, He loves it! I am convinced that an attitude of gratitude increases the effect of the favour of God (FOG). Thankfulness towards God is a favour magnet!
- The opposites of thankfulness – murmuring, complaining and dissatisfaction – bring us in direct conflict with God, as the Israelites learned on their journey through the desert. If you want to embrace God's favour, I encourage you to develop a culture of gratitude towards God. Make it part of your daily prayers to give thanks to Him for all things great and small – from your salvation to the smallest flower. You will find that it makes such a difference to the quality of your life, as it causes the FOG to settle on you.
- Do not allow 'smog' to divert you from daily giving thanks to God. Thankfulness, even in times of adversity, brings Him great joy and will cause you to see His favour manifested! Thanksgiving in tough times is like a sweet smelling aroma to God. Like beautiful flowers, the aroma of thanks will draw Him to the garden of your life!

6. Fog and His presence

- Fog is usually found at high altitudes. I have often had the privilege of driving and hiking high into the beautiful mountains of South Africa. It always stirs in me a sense of God's presence and reminds me of the Psalmist's call to 'ascend to the hill of the Lord'.
- Mountain peaks depict a meeting place with God. Abraham, Moses, Elijah and Jesus all had mountain-top meetings with God. This is a call today to press into His presence; to climb the mountain; to seek to be with Him and walk even more closely with Him. On the mountain of His presence you will encounter the thickest FOG!
- I also want to encourage you that the FOG is as much for the valleys of life as it is for the mountain tops! Don't doubt His favour in the valley. Expect the FOG.
- Ultimately you are called to live on the mountain tops of victory with God! His favour brings you into that dimension of victorious living.
- Let us make it our business to create more space for God's presence in our lives. There are a number of ways to do this. The first thing that comes

to mind is becoming still so that He can hear when He speaks (Psalm 46:10). Obedience to His Word and His voice are further factors. Every time we obey it creates space for Him to act!

- We have access to His presence by the precious blood of Christ. Make use of this and come into His presence with liberty. Hold this as the most cherished privilege in life and you will certainly live in the FOG!

7. Favour and function

- God's heart for His children is that we should live in His favour. The effect of this, however, stretches beyond our own lives. God's favour gives us a distinct testimony. It causes us to stand in contrast to the world and its ways and it points to the difference that His love and power make. It stirs the interest of people around us and gives us the opportunity for powerful witnessing.
- I pray that all of us will increasingly live in the FOG. May His favour be so evident on you that it will grab the attention of those who cross your path!
- Let His favour spill over from your life and touch the world around you with His loveliness.
- I see the FOG rolling in – be ready for it ...

Conclusion

- Embrace God's favour by faith! Thank Him that you have found favour in His sight.
- Accept by faith what you have heard today from God's Word and proclaim David's words in prayer:

Lord, I thank You for Your favour on me. I welcome the FOG in my life. Surely goodness and favour will follow me all the days of my life. Turn my mourning into dancing and clothe me with gladness! Amen.

'May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

Numbers 6:24-26 (NLT)

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.

I will exalt you, O LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

O LORD my God, I called to you for help and you healed me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.

Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name.

For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken."

O LORD, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

To you, O LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: "What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?"

Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me; O LORD, be my help."

You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.

Psalms 30:1-12 (NIV)