

PRAISING

Message 1

Praise—the Highest Work Carried Out by God’s Children

Scripture Reading: Psa. 22:3; 50:23; 106:12, 47; 146:2; Heb. 13:15

I. Praise is the highest work carried out by God’s children; we can say that the highest expression of a saint’s spiritual life is his praise to God:

- A. God’s throne is the highest point in the universe, yet He sits “enthroned upon the praises of Israel”; God’s name and even God Himself are exalted through praise—Psa. 22:3.
- B. David said in a psalm that he prayed to God three times a day (Psa. 55:17); yet in another psalm, he said that he praised God seven times a day (119:164); David was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he acknowledged the importance of praising:
 - 1. It is a good exercise, a very good lesson, and a very good spiritual practice to praise God every day.
 - 2. We should learn to praise Him when we encounter problems, when we are at a meeting, or when we are alone.
 - 3. We should praise God at least seven times a day; do not let David beat us in his praise.

II. The nature of praise is an offering, a sacrifice—Heb. 13:15:

- A. The book of Psalms is full of praises (145:1-3; 146:1-2; 148:1-5; 149; 150; however, the Psalms contain chapters not only of praises but also of suffering (Psa. 22; 69; 102; 120):
 - 1. In the Psalms we can touch the most wounded feelings, and in the Psalms we also can find the greatest and highest praises.
 - 2. God wants His people to know that the praising ones are the very ones who have been led through trying situations and whose feelings have been wounded; words of praise do not always come from the mouths of the smooth-sailing ones; they come much more from those who are under discipline and trial.
 - 3. God uses many hardships, difficulties, and slanders to create praises in His people; He causes them to learn through difficult circumstances to become praising persons before the Lord—Heb. 13:15.
 - 4. God does not want men to praise Him only when they are on the mountaintop surveying Canaan, the promised land; God desires much more to see His people writing Psalms and praising Him when they “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (23:4); this is genuine praise.
- B. Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name”:
 - 1. An offering, a sacrifice, must be offered up; this offering constitutes a loss; when a person offers up his praise, he is losing something; he is offering a sacrifice to God.
 - 2. God wants His children to praise Him in the midst of their sufferings; we should not praise only when there is gain; God wants us to praise Him in the midst of our loss.
 - 3. You may feel that praise is not suitable under a particular kind of circumstance or mood; at that very moment, you should remember that Jehovah’s throne has not changed, His name has not changed, and His glory has not changed; you should praise Him simply because He is worthy of praise—Lam. 5:19; Psa. 22:1-3; 102:11-27; cf. Acts 16:25.
- C. Nothing can ripen and mature a man like sacrifices of praise.

III. Praise has a basic ingredient—faith—Psa. 106:12:

- A. Psalm 106:12 says, “Then they believed His words; / They sang His praise”; this was the condition of the children of Israel in the wilderness; they believed, so they praised.
- B. When our prayer reaches the point where we have faith and assurance, we know that the Lord has answered our prayer, and we should praise.
- C. We have to praise as soon as we believe; first we believe and praise, and then we will experience victory.

IV. To praise is to transcend everything to touch the Lord—Acts 16:19-34:

- A. The Christian life soars through praises; a person who praises God transcends everything; he overcomes continually by his praise.
- B. Many times praise works where prayer fails; when you pray, you are still in the midst of your situation; but when you praise, you soar above your situation.
- C. Prayers may not bring us to the throne, but praise surely brings us to the throne at any time; prayers may not enable us to overcome every time, but praise does not fail even once.
- D. Whenever you run out of strength to pray and you find your spirit heavily oppressed, wounded, or sagging, praise Him; if you offer your praise at that moment, God’s Spirit will operate in you, open all the doors, and break all the chains—16:19-34.
- E. When we suffer great personal hardship and severe injustice, it is not the time for us to pray, but the time for us to praise; if we do this, all our problems will go away:
 - 1. Victory comes when one bows his head and praises the Lord: “I praise you for Your way. Your arrangement is always good. Whatever You do is right.”
 - 2. When you praise the Lord this way, your spirit will soar above your problems and your inner wounds.
 - 3. If you praise the Lord, your hurt will turn into praise; your spirit will transcend to the heights.

V. We should praise before we understand—Psa. 50:23:

- A. In Psalm 50:23 God says, “Whoever offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifies Me”; here, the word thanksgiving can also be translated as praise; nothing can glorify our God as praises can.
- B. One day, all the prayers, works, prophesying, and labor will be over; but on that day our praises will be more than today’s; praise will last for eternity; it will never cease.
- C. Today we have the opportunity to learn the best lesson; we can learn to praise God even today:
 - 1. Today is still the time when we see in a mirror obscurely (1 Cor. 13:12); although we can see a little of many things, we cannot understand the meaning behind them.
 - 2. We can only feel the pain of all the inward wounds and outward trials we have encountered and experienced; we cannot comprehend the significance behind them; this is why we do not praise.
 - 3. On that day we will see the Lord’s excellent will in every step of the Spirit’s discipline; many things, thousands and even millions of things which we do not see today, will become clear to us on that day.
 - 4. When we see everything on that day, we will bow our head and praise Him, saying, “Lord, You were never wrong...Lord, I was a fool, because I did not praise You that day. I was a fool, because I did not give thanks to You that day.”
 - 5. Therefore, today we must learn to say, “Lord, I cannot understand what You are doing, but I know that You cannot be wrong”; we have to learn to believe and to praise.