

T H E T E A C H I N G

LEGACY

O F D E R E K P R I N C E

Victory in Praise

Three concepts found in Scripture are closely related, yet distinct: worship, praise and thanksgiving. All occur frequently in the Bible so it's important that we can distinguish them. Worship is primarily an attitude or posture of the body: bowing the head, bowing the entire upper part of the body, prostrating yourself on the ground, or even bowing the human spirit before God. Praise, on the other hand, is an utterance. The Bible is emphatic that praise must come out of the mouth. Thanksgiving comes when we thank God for what He has done. In worship, we relate to God's holiness. In praise, we relate to God's greatness. In thanksgiving, we relate to God's goodness.

With that introduction to worship, praise and thanksgiving, now we will turn to the theme of praise.

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.
Psalm 48:1

The Lord is great, and for that reason He is to be praised. Praise relates us to God's greatness. He is to be praised in proportion to His greatness. Following are seven scriptural facts about praise.

1. Praise Is God's Address

Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
Psalm 22:3 KJV

Praise is God's address; it is where He lives. If you want to be where God lives, you must offer Him praise.

The Hebrew word that means "to live in a place" is the same word for "to sit." A settlement, for instance, is a place of sitting. The *New King James Bible* has beautifully translated that verse as: "You are holy; enthroned in the praises of Israel." Praise is God's throne. Our praise does not make Him a King; He is a King whether we praise Him or not. But when we praise Him, we offer Him His throne. We welcome Him and recognize His Kingship. Praise is God's dwelling place and His throne.

2. The Way into His Presence

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.
Psalm 100:4-5

Praise is the way into God's presence; the way into God's gates and courts is with praise and thanksgiving.

Then the Scripture gives us three reasons why we ought to praise God: the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations. Each of those statements is *always* true no matter what happens. If you want to get into God's presence, that is the only gate. There is no other.

Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.
Isaiah 60:18

God lives in a city surrounded by walls called Salvation. Scripture clearly and emphatically states that the only way through that wall is by a gate, and every gate is praise. In other words, without praise there is no access to God's presence and the place where His people dwell.

3. Praise and God's Blessing

Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise.
Psalm 106:47

Praise is God's reason for blessing us, the interest on what He invests in us. God saves us and brings us together to fellowship with Him and with one another because He wants us to give thanks to His name and to triumph in His praise.

David had been through a long dark period in his life. Many of us could look back over similar things in our lives.

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that [this is the purpose] my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 30:11–12

Notice that God does these things that our glory may sing praise unto Him and not be silent. But what is *our glory*? If we compare the following two Scriptures, there is no doubt to the answer.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices. *Psalm 16:9*

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter quotes this verse saying:

Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad. *Acts 2:26*

That tells us that “my glory” is “my tongue.” When the Bible says, “My glory will give thanks to You,” it means, “My tongue will give You thanks.” That is why David adds “and not be silent.” It is the organ of the body that either speaks or is silent.

God’s primary purpose in giving you a tongue is to praise Him. It is the one member of the body with which you may most perfectly praise and glorify God. Remember that God blesses you, delivers you, and takes away your mourning so that your glory will praise Him and not be silent.

4. Our Spiritual Garment

Praise is part of our spiritual clothing. Isaiah 61 speaks about the coming of Messiah and says that He would “console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes [the emblem of mourning], the oil of joy for mourning [oil being an emblem of the Holy Spirit], the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (verse 3).

In modern English “the spirit of heaviness” is depression. But when you wear the garment of praise, the spirit of heaviness departs.

Another Scripture says: “Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful” (Psalm 33:1). When you put on the garment of praise, in the Spirit you are looking your best. It suits you. It adorns you.

5. Salvation and Praise

Praise is a way of deliverance. God is speaking:

Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God. *Psalm 50:23*

I believe it would be legitimate (though somewhat free) to translate that verse this way: “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me and prepares a way that I

may show him My salvation.” Through praising God we open the way for Him to intervene supernaturally on our behalf. There are many examples in Scripture where the intervention of God is brought about by praise.

Let’s look at one well-known example in 2 Chronicles. A strong alien army was invading Judah, and King Jehoshaphat realized he did not have the military resources to meet this army. So he resorted to spiritual weapons instead. Before they marched out to the battle, in accordance with God’s instructions, this is what they did:

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying, “Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever.” 2 Chronicles 20:21

As many people have pointed out, that is a strange battle strategy! Instead of sending out the tanks first, they sent out the choir to praise God. It sounds crazy, but it worked. When God’s people praised the Lord, God intervened and dealt with their enemies.

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. verse 22

In the New Testament we read about Paul and Silas in jail. It’s midnight. They have been beaten, their backs covered with blood. They are in the inner prison in maximum security with their hands and feet in stocks. And what do they do next? They start to pray and to praise God.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them [the Greek says, “the prisoners listened attentively”]. And suddenly there was a great earthquake . . . Acts 16:25

All the doors were opened, and everybody’s bands were loosed. Praise provoked the earthquake; God intervened supernaturally. This is a consistent principle of Scripture. If you want the supernatural intervention of God on your behalf in a difficult or impossible situation, the key that will release it is your praise. And usually it’s at a time when you would feel least like praising God in the natural.

6. A Spiritual Weapon

Praise is also a weapon of spiritual warfare. David is speaking to the Lord here:

Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger. *Psalm 8:2*

“The enemy and the avenger” is Satan. We need to silence him because he is accusing us before the throne of God day and night. How? The strength that comes “out of the mouth” will do it, but it does not tell us exactly what that is. Jesus quoted this same Scripture in Matthew 21:

“Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?’” *Matthew 21:16*

David said, “You have ordained strength”; Jesus, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, changed it to “You have perfected praise.” That tells us that the ordained strength of God’s people is perfect praise. When we offer God perfect praise in the unseen realm that our natural eyes cannot penetrate, we silence Satan. We shut him up and we take from him his great weapon of accusation. No wonder the devil doesn’t want you to praise God.

7. The Sacrifice of Praise

Finally, praise is a sacrifice; it costs you something. There is a beautiful Scripture that describes what is going to happen after Israel is restored. In place of desolation, misery and mourning, they are going to have:

The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say, “Praise the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for His mercy endures forever”—and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD.
Jeremiah 33:11

I like that translation because I believe it brings out the real meaning. The sacrifice God wants us to bring into His house is praise. This is very clearly stated in Hebrews:

Therefore by Him [Jesus Christ] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
Hebrews 13:15

If you praise God when you feel happy and everything is going well, that’s good—but it is not a sacrifice. When everything is going wrong and you still praise God, *that* is a sacrifice. It costs you something to praise God when you don’t feel like it, but that is the time we most need to praise Him. We should praise God for three reasons: He is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations. Those reasons never change.

Questions on Praise

When should we praise God?

Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.

Psalm 145:2

You should praise God every day, forever and ever. Psalm 34 begins with this explanation: “A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.” David had to flee from his native land and from King Saul who was trying to murder him. He had taken refuge in the court of a Gentile king named Abimelech. In order to protect himself, David had to pretend to be mad. Scripture says that he slobbered on his beard and scraped on the doors with his nails like a madman. King Abimelech said, “Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? Have I need of madmen?” (1 Samuel 21:14–15).

Now that you understand the background, let’s look at David’s reaction to the situation:

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 34:1

That is what makes a man or woman of God. When you’re down, everything’s against you, and you can see no natural reason for doing it, you still praise the Lord.

How do we praise?

In Psalm 111 the psalmist says, “I will praise the LORD with my whole heart” (verse 1). I think it is grievous to praise God in a half-hearted way. Sometimes I see people in praise services who are just mouthing the words. He is worthy to be praised with our whole heart, so put everything you’ve got into it.

Psalm 63:4 says: “Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.” Lift them up all the way. Forget about the person behind you! What God thinks is more important. God says, “Praise Me with your hands lifted up.”

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

Psalm 63:5

So the hands, the mouth, and the lips are all instruments of praise. Your whole body is involved in praising God.

Let them praise His name with the dance. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance.
Psalm 149:3; 150:4

It is also scriptural to praise God in dancing. By it, you will enter into a new level of worship and joy that you never knew.

Who should praise God?

Psalm 148 lists 29 different categories of creatures and people that are exhorted to praise God. But just in case anybody was left out, the last verse of Psalm 150 says, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD" (verse 6). Your breath was given to you, first and foremost, so you could praise God. Therefore, you are misusing your God-given breath if you don't praise Him with it.

Is there anybody who doesn't praise the Lord?

The answer is yes: "The dead do not praise the LORD" (Psalm 115:17). That is the only group of people. So if you don't praise the Lord, you know your problem!

If you want to come alive, you must praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

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