

Sing Praises With Understanding

by Carter Conlon

When we sing praises with understanding, the heavens are opened and a way out of trouble is made known.

Duration: 50:02

Scripture: 2 Kings 3:13-17, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Sing Praises"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by emphasizing the importance of taking a pause from our daily activities and engaging in a time of worship. He shares the story of Elisha and how the hand of the Lord came upon him when the minstrel played. Through this story, he highlights the power of worship in receiving revelation and guidance from God. The preacher also discusses the impact of worship on breaking the dominion of evil and allowing individuals to consider their ways. He concludes by referencing Psalm 47 and encouraging the audience to sing praises with understanding, as it brings victory and opens the heavens.

Transcript

Psalm 47. Sing praises with understanding. Beginning at verse 1. O clap your hands, all ye people.

Shout to God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord at most high is terrible. He is a great king over all the earth.

He shall subdue the people under us and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. God has gone up with a shout.

The Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God. Sing praises.

Sing praises to our king. Sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth.

Sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen. God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong unto God. He is greatly exalted.

Father, we ask you, Lord, for your mind and heart, as you've already been revealing yourself and your mind all through this service today. Lord, you have an issue in your heart that you want to convey very clearly to your people. I yield, O God, as a vessel simply to speak on your behalf.

And I ask you for an empowerment, a quickening of mind, body, spirit, that I may get out of the way, Lord, that you may manifest your very heart to the people that you have gathered in this house today. O God, give us an understanding of why we sing. We thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name.

Now, Psalm 47, verse 7, the second half, well, actually the whole verse, the psalmist's writing says, For God is the king of all the earth. Sing ye praises with understanding. Now, in the original Hebrew text, it means sing praises knowing the reason for something, to have an insight, to behold, to act in a prosperous manner.

It's not, the devil is not afraid of songs, folks. We can get together and we can have a real good band and a big choir, and we can strike up the right chords and sing some wonderful songs. The devil is not afraid of that.

But when we sing, when what we sing is infused with faith and understanding, something begins to happen. There is a spiritual transaction when God's people, with an understanding mind and a believing heart, begin to sing the praises of God. 1 Samuel 16, beginning at verse 14, shows us very clearly when the righteous and believing people begin to praise God, evil loses its power.

But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, 1 Samuel 16, 14, and an evil spirit from the Lord, or in other words, which God allowed to come to him, troubled him. And Saul's servant said unto him, Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee to seek out a man who is a cunning player on a harp.

And it shall come to pass when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning and playing, a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

Now, the power of evil is not broken just by somebody who sings a song or is a skilled musician. There's a lot more involved in it than this. They sought out somebody because of this evil power that had annexed itself to this king of Israel.

And they found this young man called David, a mighty valiant man. In other words, a man of integrity. There was deep-seated integrity in his heart.

He was a man of war. He was not afraid to fight for the right cause. He was a committed person to truth and prudent in matters.

And really, in the original text, it means he was careful in his judgment and in his speech. He was not just singing the right song when he played the harp. He was singing the right song from sunup to sundown, as it is.

Even if the end of the song would be, God, I'm sorry for what I've done this afternoon, he was still singing the right song. He was very careful in his speech, very careful in how he presented himself. And the Lord

was with him, of course, giving him a radiance.

Scripture says he was a comely man, person rather, and the Lord was with him. Wherefore, Saul sent messengers, verse 19, unto Jesse and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread and a bottle of wine and a kid and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

And David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly and became his armor bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.

And it came to pass, verse 23, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with his hand. And so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. When righteous, believing people begin to praise God, evil loses its power.

Now, this is an incredible thing. You see, we're not just singing songs. For example, the choir this morning, when you're singing shame, you're not just singing songs.

You are making a declaration of a truth that is far beyond anything we could ever procure in and of ourselves. We're making a declaration of the fact that we are serving a triumphant Christ who has, in fact, changed us. And when we are singing and our singing is in unison with God, then the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness.

And you begin to move out of the realm of song and into the realm of ministry. You are making a declaration. I have been on crusades where I've seen the audience literally set free to hear the word of God before ever opening my mouth to say a single word.

The power of evil, the dominion of evil, the domination of evil is broken, even if it's only momentarily, so that a captivated man, it could be a captivated audience, it could be a captivated nation, may stop for a season and consider their ways. Now, Saul, I suppose, in these moments of freedom could really genuinely have considered his ways. Unfortunately, he chose not to.

It is undeniable this morning, anybody who's here, irrespective of how you are living, what you came in with, it is undeniable that in these moments of praise that we have experienced in this house, because this is a house of believing praise, that you feel a release. Your mind is open for a moment. The troubles that you walked in the door with, that so clouding you, the evil, perhaps even, that was wanting to grip your heart and govern your life, seems to have lost its hold.

And for a moment, even if it's only for a moment, you are able to consider your ways. You are able to look and clearly think and clearly judge whether or not what you're doing and thinking and where you're going is right, whether it has the desired end of God at the end of your walk or whether or not you're going to remain in captivity. Evil loses its power.

That's why choir the devil comes against you so hard, even on the way to church Sunday morning. That's why it's so tough sometimes to get into this choir loft and for the orchestra to sit down at your instruments and music, because this is not about a song service. This is a spiritual battle.

And you are on the forefront of this battle. And I thank God that there's a cleanness on this platform this morning. The evidence is the presence of Christ releasing the hearts and spirits and minds of many people in this congregation to be able to consider the ways of God and consider their own ways.

Now, if you'll go ahead to 2 Kings, please, chapter 3. When we sing praises with understanding, the heavens are opened. Not only are a people released, even if it's only momentarily, to consider their ways, but the heavens open and a way out of trouble is made known. How many here this morning you've gotten your answer to the question of your heart during the worship service? Let me see your hands.

We're in this church. You came here troubled. You came here burdened.

You came here cast down. You came here convinced even that evil perhaps was going to triumph over some area of your life or your family. You came in and the praises of God were being sung.

And momentarily, this troubling of your mind is gone. And heaven begins to be opened. And before the preacher stands to preach, you're ready to you've got the victory already.

I've been there. I know what that's all about. You've got the victory.

You're already ready to dance. You're already ready to get up and run and shout and jump. You don't even need a preacher.

The praises of God have broken through. God's presence has come into your heart and enlightened your mind. In Second Kings, chapter three, verse 13.

Now, this is a story of three kings who formed some foolish plans without consulting God. And they brought their own lives as well as the lives of many who followed them into jeopardy. They were really at the point of being overrun and destroyed.

In Elisha, Second Kings, chapter three, verse 13, said to the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay, for the kings, for the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab. So they are they are convinced, at least a portion of the three are convinced that they're going to be destroyed.

And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee. Now, I see in verse 14 that Elisha is a little bit heated in his spirit. Has anybody ever come to church like that on Sunday morning? Just a little bit heated.

You're you've formed something in your heart that is not right. And this this heat in your spirit is not allowing you to hear from God. It can be an argument that you're in the midst of in your home with a husband, a wife.

It can be with your children. And you're so entrenched in your position. You are you're so heated that the heavens are momentarily locked.

I'm not saying Elisha was necessarily so, but the potential is here because he's speaking to two kings, three kings, actually. And he said, I wouldn't even give you the time of day because of your foolishness and what you're doing. Were it not that there's a regard in God's heart for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah.

And he says in verse 15, I love it. He said, Bring me now a minstrel. In other words, I need a worship time here before I can hear anything.

You ever been there? Come into the house of the Lord and just God, I want to hear from you, but I'm not ready for the preacher yet. Can we just pause that for a moment? And can we have a time of worship? And the minstrel came and it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches.

And you see, Elisha didn't know the mind of the Lord at that particular moment. You see, in verse 14 and but God in verse 15 begins to reveal a plan for the future of his people. The hand of the Lord came upon him and in verse 16, it tells us that it was a way of prosperity.

The New Living Testament says it this way, verses 16 and 17. This is what the Lord says. This dry valley will be filled with pools of water.

You will see neither wind nor rain, says the Lord. But this valley will be filled with water and you will have plenty for yourselves and for your cattle and your other animals. In other words, God says, I'm going to do something.

Have you ever been in a time of genuine worship and praise? God just simply begins to speak into your mind. The very God who calls things that are not as if they are. Yes, this is coming against you.

And yes, you have made some foolish decisions. And yes, some of your ways need to change. But here's what I'm going to do.

I'm going to bring living water to you in your place of impossibility. I'm going to give you so much. You're going to be so full because you're now honestly seeking me with a genuine heart.

You won't see how it comes with your natural mind. You won't understand it with any amount of natural effort. It will not be procured.

But you're going to leave and you're going to wake up tomorrow with resource beyond your wildest dreams. You'll have enough for yourselves. You'll have enough for your home.

You'll have enough for your neighbors. There will be an overflowing supply because you have stopped. You've considered now and I've opened the heavens to you.

And I love the fact that we serve a God who speaks about things that are not as if they are. That's what makes this such a supernatural and a fantastic relationship with the living God. He makes everything new in His time.

He changes from image to image and glory to glory. He gives strength. He imparts wisdom.

He plants a new heart. He gives a new spirit. He imbibes with courage as it is those who have been walking fearful, perhaps through life, not knowing which way to go.

And not only does He say there's going to be a victory, but He begins to show them how the victory is going to come. And He begins to give understanding and wisdom and show them the plan. Verse 18, He says, And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord, for He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

God says, I'm not just going to give you water. I'm going to give you power over your enemies. I'm going to.

I'm good. Yes, you got yourself into a mess, but you've stopped to seek me. You stop to consider your ways.

And when we do stop and we are in a place where people are praising God who have understanding of His ways. This was obviously a skilled minstrel that the Lord brought here to sit and play before. If he would not have been, I'm sure Elijah would have just flicked him away.

So get away from me. You annoy me with your songs because that's what God says to backslidden Israel. Take the noise of your songs away from me.

Now, this is a man, a young person, a woman, perhaps of incredible integrity, who's there, who's worshiping God, speaking in spirit and in truth. And when that worship goes forth, the heavens are opened, a way of prosperity and a plan over the enemy is revealed. And he says in verse 19, you'll smite every fence city and every choice city and shall fell every good tree and stop all the wells of water and mar every good piece of land with stones.

You're not only going to go against your enemies, you're going to annihilate your enemies. You're going to destroy those in the strength of your God that have stood against you. Now, if that doesn't make you want to praise, I don't know what does.

When we've come in and we're in a difficult situation and God begins to speak. That's why the psalmist says in Psalm 47, sing praises with understanding. Sing praises with an understanding that we're not just coming trying to hit the right note to feel a tingly presence of God in our midst.

No, we're coming to make a declaration that God, your ways are right. Your ways are true. Your promises are yea and amen.

The things that you have spoken unto me are going to happen. You are going to lead me. The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord.

All things work together for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. And I believe in my heart that every tongue, every lying tongue, every demonic tongue, every power of evil, every mental argument, every backslidden thought out of my own heart, shall I have the right to condemn it and to curse it in the name of the Lord.

This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. I have a righteousness that is not my own. It is imparted unto me by the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if God be with me who can stand against me. Now I begin to sing. Now I begin to clap my hands.

Now I begin to shout in the house of God. Now I begin to sing with understanding. I serve a mighty God.

I serve a victorious conquering king. I serve the Christ who rose from the grave on the third day and has the keys of death and hell in his hands. A conquering king who is coming with ten thousand of his saints.

He has a new name written. And on his tie is written, King of kings and Lord of lords. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron.

He will sit in the throne of his holiness. And all nations throughout the world will come to him and will worship him. And I and you will rule and reign with him for all of eternity.

Now I can praise him. Now I can thank him. Praise with understanding in the times of moments of difficult trial lifts us to realize that we will not be overcome by evil or by circumstance.

We will not be overcome. We are more than conquerors. Every saint in the house of God, if all you can do is whisper the name of Jesus, you are more than a conqueror through Christ.

You will not be triumphed over. You will not end up on the bottom of some heap at the end of your days. Christ has interwoven his life inseparably with yours.

The very honor of his name is in getting you not over the finish line, but marching over, standing at the end day, glorious and victorious in your conquering king. At the end of days, when everything is over, you and I will stand with Christ in victory. We will stand.

Oh, it can be hard here. Yes, there are floods. There are fires.

There are trials. There are difficulties. There are sicknesses.

There is death. It all has to come on this side of eternity. But this is only a vapor.

It's only here for a moment. It's a puff of smoke in the air that appears and disappears. It's like grass that grows in the morning at the end of the day is gone.

This is just a temporal, temporary state. But one day this corruption is going to put on incorruption. This mortality is going to put on immortality.

We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. As he is, so shall we be. And we shall ever reign with our Lord.

Now, the scripture tells us to look to Jesus in Hebrews 12 to the author and finisher of our faith. Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him, the scripture says, that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.

Now, I want you to go with me to Matthew chapter 26, please, if you would, in your Bibles. Who, for the joy that was set before him. Now, we know that ultimately that joy was the fact, I suppose, first and foremost, the joy is that he was knowing that he was doing the will of his Father.

There's a great joy in this. In John 17, the whole prayer of Christ just exudes with a joy. That he knows that his life has fulfilled a course and a purpose, and his Father's name is being glorified.

And there's an incredible joy that comes to the heart of any child of God. Even if our life is a difficult one, to know that we have trusted him, and through his indwelling strength and his faithfulness, that his name has been glorified. And there has to be a joy if you're a genuine believer in Christ in this.

A secondary joy, I suppose, is the joy that he had in knowing that not only he would receive an inheritance of the Father, but all who believed in him would one day be with him where he is, the right hand of Almighty God. You and I would be there. He saw your face even before you were born.

And there was a deep abiding joy in his heart to know that you would one day be there with him. Sharing with what was in the heart of God from before the creation of the world. To have fellowship, to have a bride for all of eternity.

Deep abiding joy. But I believe there was a joy that was even before this. I'll show it to you.

In Matthew chapter 26 and verse 21, the circumstances were less than ideal in the natural. Jesus knew that his own disciples were going to forsake him, at least for a season. He was about to be betrayed.

Chapter 26, verse 21, he said, And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Not easy to go through betrayal. It's a difficult time.

And if you've ever experienced it, I really don't wish it on anyone. But I don't know if we can ever fully appreciate the depth of God's keeping power until these things have come. And they do, from time to time, come to every life.

Verse 26 to 28. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it. And he gave it to his disciples and said, Take eat, this is my body.

And he took the cup and gave thanks. And gave it to them saying, Drink all of it. This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

But I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you and my father's kingdom. That's verse 29. He was being led to face incredible pain and sorrow.

And I realize that there are people here today that your life is not easy. It's wonderful to come into church. It's wonderful for a moment just to forget the struggles and trials of your day, your family, maybe your own physical circumstance.

And you say in your heart, Oh, I wish that I could be a worshipper all the time as I am here when I gather together with the people of God. Now, Hebrews says, Consider him. He had a joy set before him.

And because of it, he was able to despise as it is or count less worthy the pain that he had to go through before reaching the father's desired end for his life. And in verse 30, it says that when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. How many people could worship in that circumstance? You're just you're going to be betrayed.

A man is dipping his hand in the dish with you. He's about to betray you. He's heading out the door to sell you for a few pieces of silver.

You know, you're about to suffer incredible pain. And the disciples are a little bit confused. You don't even have the privilege.

It's like David. He said, I looked on my left and on my right and no man was there to encourage me. And he knows he's about to suffer just an unspeakable suffering that perhaps obviously nobody from the foundation of the world has ever endured this kind of suffering.

And then he says, let's worship. Let's praise God. Amazing.

Now, what was the joy that was set before him? I believe I know in part. Obviously, I shared with you the end results, of course, were the joy. But there was something else.

Now, if you go to Psalm 118, most commentators believe there's a series of songs that are sung in the Passover time. And this would have been the last one to be sung. Hendrickson's pulpit commentary, for example, believes that it's Psalm 118.

And I think they're in good company. Many others do, too, as well. Let's sing a song.

He said, let's worship. And so after all of this discussion of betrayal, the giving of my body, the shedding of my blood, he says, let's worship. Remember, the psalmist said we're to sing praises with understanding.

I believe in great measure the joy set before him was Psalm 118. It was the word of God. He was about to go through incredible suffering.

He had only his father's word that this was going to come to an end that had been pre-prescribed by his father from before the beginning of time. The circumstances were not favorable. And that's why the writer of Hebrews says, consider him.

He had to go through much opposition. But there was a joy set before him. And you don't get through just singing songs.

The songs we sing have to have a basis in faith on what God has spoken to us. Or the songs will always be up when we're on the mountaintop and down when we're in the valley. We will be always on this treadmill because we're riding this crest of emotion, which is really not true praise.

The truest of praise that comes to God is when you're in the midst of the fire like the Hebrew boys and you just make a choice. No matter what happens, God is going to be God to me. God is going to be faith.

I'm going to praise him anyway. If I burn, I'm going to praise him. If I live, I'm going to praise him.

I'm going to glorify him no matter what happens in my life. You see, but Jesus had before him his father's word. And his father's word was the joy, I believe, at that particular moment, at least at the last supper.

This was the, may I call it the primary joy. May I call it the first line joy. Yes, I will one day see what I believe.

But today I have to receive it by faith. I can't just sing that one day I'm going to be over there and just moan and groan all the way through here until I get there. My song can't be just when I get there.

We sing a choir song. When we get there, there'll be singing. There'll be shouting.

I hear a lot of it here, though. I hear it on this side. There is a singing and shouting with faith when we're singing praises with understanding.

Oh, give thanks. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. Now, you've got to picture Jesus and the disciples at the last supper singing this.

And this is a song, by the way. It's not a poem. This is actually a song.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His mercy endures forever. Let Israel now say that his mercy endures forever.

Let the house of Aaron now say that his mercy endures forever. Let them that fear the Lord say his mercy endures forever. I called upon the Lord in distress.

The Lord answered me and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side. I will not fear.

What can man do to me? This is Christ at the last supper. The Lord is on my side. What can man do to me? Oh, they can slap my face and they can whip my back and put nails in my feet and hands.

But what can they do to me? Because God is on my side. Sing praises with understanding. That's what the psalmist means.

Verse 7. The Lord takes my part with them that help me. Therefore, shall I deceive my desire upon them that hate me? It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in princes.

All nations compass me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them. Now, Christ is speaking right into the future. There's a day when all nations of the world, in a spiritual sense, they were about him now.

The rebellion in the hearts of humanity without God had surrounded him. But there is a physical time when all nations will surround Jerusalem, but they will be destroyed. They cannot destroy the work of God.

They compass me about. Yea, they compass me about, but in the name of the Lord, verse 11, I will destroy them. They compass me about like bees.

They are quenched as the fire of thorns. Picture him now in the judgment hall of Pilate. Picture him now being mocked by the soldiers.

Picture him now on a cross on Calvary's hill with the surrounding crowds like bees buzzing, tormenting, trying to sting him, trying to make death have some unbearable sting and take away his confidence in what God had said before him. Thou hast thrust sword at me that I might fall, verse 13, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song.

He has become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. Verse 17, I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.

Grave will not have dominion over me. I will not be triumphed over by the powers of evil. Let the world throw everything it's got at me.

But God has spoken into my heart that I shall live, which means I shall live. Hallelujah. The Lord has chastened me sure, but not given me over unto death.

Open to me, verse 19, the gates of righteousness, and I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord. This gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art

become my salvation.

The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day which the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the Last Supper, folks.

This is pre-Calvary. This is coming into great trial and tribulation. And He says this is the day.

Half the people in the church today can't sing this song because they didn't get their toast done on the right side in the morning. And they had an argument on the way to church in the car, and they can't sing this is the day the Lord has made. Because they're not singing praises with understanding.

This is pre-prescribed of God, Christ is saying. This is the day, a great day of salvation coming to all the world. Save now, He says, I beseech thee, O Lord.

Verse 25, O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. In other words, take away through my life the spiritual poverty that has gripped all men and women created in the image of God. Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord.

We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. God is the Lord which has shown us light. Bind the sacrifice with cords even to the horns of the altar.

Thou art my God and I will praise thee. Thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good and His mercy endures forever.

Now, go back to Psalm 47 where we started. Now this psalm actually is written to the choir director, believe it or not. It's called to the chief musician.

O clap your hands, all ye people, and shout unto God with the voice to triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible. He is a great king over all the earth.

He shall subdue the people under us and the nations under our feet. Basically, the psalmist is saying this. His victory is our victory.

His triumph is our triumph. The promises of God, the defeating of the powers of darkness. If we are more than conquerors, then the devil and his forces are more than defeated.

He shall choose our inheritance for us, verse 4. The excellency of Jacob, whom he loves. Basically, another translation says he will lead us into the promised land. The promised land, of course, is Jesus Christ.

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. His promises, in other words, are our promises. His victory is our victory.

Do you believe it? Do you believe it with all your heart? You see, if you don't believe it, you can't sing praises with understanding. You have to believe that His victory is your victory. You have to believe that His promises are your promises.

And that's why we have a church generation that is worshiping worship. Because they're out of the Word of God now. And they don't have the joy set before them.

The joy is the promises of God. Yes, it's an eternity with Christ. Thank God with all of our hearts for that.

But there's a joy to be experienced here and now. It's this promise of God for every situation that we'll ever confront in your life. There's a joy that God says, I will set before you.

And you'll be a peculiar people. You'll be strange to the society around you. You're walking through the fire.

You're praising God. You're going through hard times. You're praising God.

You've been told you've got cancer. You're praising God. You've got death in your family.

You're praising God. Everything around seems to be falling apart. You're praising God.

Everyone's losing their jobs in your company. You're praising God. Because He has given you a promise that He's going to provide for you all of your days.

You are praising God. You are praising Him with understanding. You are singing praises in His house.

And your praises, your praises are breaking the power of the devil over the minds of fallen men who are living and alive. Your praises are causing heaven to begin to be opened. Not just to your own soul, but the souls of those that you are ministering to.

Your praises are causing people to go into the Word of God. And begin to search the Scriptures again. And begin to understand the purpose and meaning for our creation and for our lives.

And begin to lift our voices to the God who has promised to save us and be faithful to keep us unto the end. For God, verse 6, says, sing praises to God. Sing praises.

Sing praises to our King. Sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth.

Sing ye praises with understanding. God reigns over the heathen. God sits on the throne of His holiness.

The princes of the people are gathered together. Even the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong unto God.

He is greatly exalted. In other words, He is King over all the earth. And soon, all nations, all kings, all kingdoms, every knee, every tongue, every heart, every ruler, every dictator, every despot, every skeptic, every agnostic, every atheist, every person, every race, every color, every language, every country, who has ever been born, will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Let me just read it to you. I'm going to close with this from Isaiah, chapter 45, verses 22 to 25.

In verse 22, he says, look to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Unto me, God says. I have sworn that every knee is going to bow, every tongue is going to swear. And of course, we know from the New Testament that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Surely, shall one say in the Lord, I have righteousness and strength. Even to him shall men come and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In other words, everyone who has opposed this only saving truth of God through Jesus Christ will be ashamed.

Every dictator, every atheist, every every skeptic, every radio talk show host, every scorner of God will one day bend his knee and be ashamed for many. It will be sadly too late. The day of salvation will have come and gone.

In Israel, shall all the seed in the Lord, shall all the seed of Israel be justified and show glory. But in verse 24, he begins by saying, surely, shall one say in the Lord, I have righteousness and strength. Yes, many, many are going to scoff.

We're living in a scoffing time. Everything that even resembles truth is being now scorned and scoffed at. It's a terrible day that we're living in today.

But Isaiah says, or the Lord says to Isaiah. But there will be one. There will be one.

Surely, who will say. In the Lord, I have found righteousness. In the Lord, I have found my cleansing.

In the Lord, I have found freedom. In the Lord, I found a purpose to live. In the Lord, I found water in the dry land.

In the Lord, I found a key to every prison door. In the Lord, I found ice for my blinded eyes. In the Lord, I found a healing salve for my wounded heart.

Surely, one will say this. Surely, somebody, up to the last day, when the last soul comes into the kingdom of God. There will be a day.

There will be a church. There will be a day. There will be a time when the last person bends his knee in an hour when Christ may be found.

Surely, one will come. I'm believing that in my heart today. That some will come and say, I have righteousness and strength.

Not only have I found cleansing from my sin, but I've found promises. I've found a God who's going to be faithful. He has destined my life to be fulfilled in him, in himself.

And he has procured in his heart a plan for me from before the foundation of the world. He had a plan for my life. And he's going to bring me through to the fulfillment of that plan.

And I will be able to say in my generation, I'm clean. I'm cleansed. And I have strength.

And I'll be able to sing. And as I sing, people will see this song and fear and begin to trust in the Lord. That's what David was talking about in Psalm 40.

He's put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto my God. And many will see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord.

They will say, how can you sing this kind of a song in this type of a society? Every person here who's in a trial, and you're looking for a way out, might I suggest to you it's time to sing and praise God with understanding. Might I suggest to you that it might be more appropriate, instead of looking to escape your

cross, that you just begin to praise God, that he's counted you worthy even to suffer for his name's sake. Might I suggest you begin to clap your hands and declare God to be faithful.

Declare that his victory is your victory. His triumph is your triumph. His promises, his inheritance is your inheritance.

There is a purpose much bigger than what our natural mind or natural eye can see. Begin to trust that God will be faithful. Begin to get into this gold mine of the heart and mind of God for you.

And read a line or two. Read a chapter or two. When you begin to praise God this way, you simply have to sometimes put your Bible down and just begin to shout out to God.

Whether it's an audible shout, or it's just a shout in your heart, or whether it's just a yeah that comes out of you, there's something in you that has to praise God. Because there's a joy set before you. You may have a child that seems to be spiritually dead, but God says, no, he's not dead, he's just sleeping.

I'm about to speak his name shortly, I'm going to wake him up. You say, yes, yes, yes! Hallelujah! And everyone who's a sinner living apart from God, God has today given you a moment to consider your ways. And you'd be a liar if you denied that today.

You've had a moment to consider. Your pursuit of money is leaving you empty. Your pursuit of fame, your pursuit of satisfying the cravings of your hearts, your entertainment have not satisfied you.

Otherwise, you wouldn't be here. Jesus Christ is not an add-on to the other pursuits of life and society. He is the Lord of your life, or not at all.

He's given you a moment to consider your ways. What a tragedy for so many who have heard the gospel in every generation, and finally, on one day, see him in all his glory and say, oh, Jesus, your Lord, but it's too late. It's time to bend your knee and confess your need of a Savior.

And the scripture says, in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory. You'll be justified. Surely one will come.

I thank God in my heart that I'm delivered from the need for masses of people. It's nice when a lot of people respond, but I don't feel any compulsion for that anymore. The angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner that comes, and I'm perfectly willing to join them.

The scripture says, surely one shall say, in the Lord I have righteousness and strength. And it says, this type of man will come to him. And in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.

Now, this is interesting, and this is my closing thought. Those who come to Christ and bend the knee, and say, Jesus, I need you, whether it's in my trial, or whether I just am willing to acknowledge that I'm a sinner and I need a Savior. He said, I'll justify you.

I'll cleanse you. I'll wipe away your record. Best way I can describe it.

I'll take the blood of my son that was shed on Calvary, and with that blood I will cover your sin, your wrong that you've committed against me, and you'll be born again. That's what it means. It's as if you had no previous life.

Spiritually speaking, it's gone. And you'll start all over again. You'll be a brand new creation.

And he said, and these who are justified shall glory. And the word glory in Hebrew is halal. And it means to shine.

It means to be splendid. It means to praise, to celebrate. It means to be radiant.

It means to give light. It means to be famous. Not necessarily that you are a big famous evangelist or anything, but you have this fame of Christ as it is within you.

People look and see the new countenance. And that's the context of the famousness. It means to burst forth with rejoicing and praise to God.

The man who bends his knee and confesses with his mouth, Jesus Christ is Lord. I remember in my early years as a Christian, I visited a church one time that really didn't know how to clap their hands and praise God. And it was so annoying.

I was just saved. I was reading this book. I couldn't wait for the service to end.

And when the service ended, I stayed until I was all alone. It was just my wife and a friend. And then I began to leap and dance in the house of God.

And I ran up and down the aisles and I sang, He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today. He walks with me and talks with me. A long life's narrow way.

He lives, He lives. Salvation to impart. You ask me how I know He lives.

He lives within my heart. Hallelujah, hallelujah. The second verse is rejoice, rejoice, O Christian.

Lift up your voice and sing eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ our King, the hope of all who seek Him, the help of all who find. None other is so loving, so good, so kind. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today.

He walks with me and He talks with me. A long life's narrow way. He lives, He lives.

Salvation, salvation, salvation to impart. He lives within my heart. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah. Stand, please stand.

Oh, Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Oh, Jesus.

Oh, Jesus. We praise You. God, we bless You.

We worship You, Lord. We worship You. King of kings and Lord of lords.

Hallelujah, Lamb of God. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. If you're a sinner today, unsaved, come to this altar and bend your knee to God. He will cleanse you of your sin.

He will give you a new life. He will give you hope. He will give you strength.

He will put a song in your heart. Slip out of your seat up in the balcony. Main sanctuary.

Make your way down here. In the annex, you can stand between the screens. And those that are going through this deep, deep heart trial, and you're not quite sure if you're going to make it through, it's time to start praising Him with understanding.

Slip out of wherever you are right now. Meet me down here. We're going to pray together.

Hallelujah. I want to ask you a question this morning. How many in this church, both in the education annex and the overflow rooms, sanctuary, balcony, you've had a chance to consider your ways today.

You've heard the praises of God's people. You've heard the word open to you. And now you want to say, you want to make a declaration.

I've been a sinner. I've been living as a sinner. And I've never surrendered my life to Jesus Christ.

Or maybe you have done so in the past in a very flippant way, but it really didn't bring Christ into your life and practice. And today you say, Jesus, today's the day I bend my knee, and I confess with my mouth that you are my Lord. I'm here today to receive the salvation that you freely offered me, but not to receive it as a light thing.

I receive you not only as Savior, but as Lord of my life. And I'm trusting you that you're going to guide me. If that's you today, you can't do this in a corner.

You have to do it openly. I'm going to ask you just to raise your hand with me, wherever you are, all through the balcony, main sanctuary. Go ahead.

Raise it high. Don't be ashamed. Christ is not ashamed of you right now.

You don't have to be ashamed of Him. Raise your hand. Hold it up.

Make a declaration to everybody around you that I'm coming to Christ today. I'm giving my life to Jesus Christ. Okay, let's pray together.

Now, Father, I pray that you seal these now with the Holy Spirit of promise. We're about to dedicate their lives to you and receive the salvation that you have freely given them. But this is not a light thing, Lord.

We acknowledge this. This is eternal. Pray with me, those who raised your hands, and others who may want to encourage them.

Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I have lived in sin. I've lived away from you.

I'm sorry for my sin. I'm sorry that it's my sin that sent you to a horrible death on a cross. But you loved me so much that you were willing to pay that price to have me back.

Help me to understand this and not to take this lightly. Jesus, I open my heart to you and at this very moment I invite you in to be the Lord and the Savior of my life. I believe, because your word says, that if I will believe in my heart that you died for my sins and if I will confess with my mouth that you rose again for my justification, I will be saved.

I believe with all of my heart because my prayer is sincere. My repentance, my turning from sin, my desire for new life that honors you is genuine. I believe therefore at this very moment my sins are washed away.

I am clean. I am justified. I am made right and received into the heart of God.

I believe that I am saved, that when I die I have an inheritance in Jesus Christ in the kingdom of heaven in the kingdom of God. Now, I rejoice with all the angels of heaven around the throne of God who are happy that I have done this this day in Jesus' name. Amen.

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