

Praise - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Praise is the only appropriate response to God's greatness and is a way to access God's presence.

Duration: 29:27

Scripture: Psalm 16:9, Psalm 33:1, Psalm 50:23, Psalm 61:3, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:26

Topics: "Worship And Praise", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of praise in the life of a believer. He shares his personal experience of going through inner conflicts and finding resolution through studying the theme of praise. The speaker explains that worship, praise, and thanksgiving are closely related concepts found in Scripture. He highlights the power of praise to open the way for God's intervention and supernatural demonstration of salvation. The sermon also references the story of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20, where praise played a crucial role in the intervention of God against a strong enemy army.

Transcript

This is tape number 4081. Derek Prince speaks on the subject, Prayer and Spiritual Warfare. This message is entitled, Praise.

I've been asked to speak this morning on the subject of praise. What I have to say will not be altogether new, but as I worked through my message or reworked it last night, it was borne in upon me personally how essential it is to keep praising the Lord. And God spoke to me about the necessity of maintaining a life of praise.

I was going through some deep inner conflicts myself at the time, and I was asking God to show me the way out and the resolution. And I really believe it came when I began to study this theme of praise once more. There are three concepts we find in scripture that are somewhat closely related and yet they're distinct.

That's worship, praise and thanksgiving. You'll find all those words occur very, very frequently in the bible. They're related and yet they're distinct.

And I would like to begin by just giving you a few key thoughts to distinguish these three concepts. All the words in scripture for worship describe primarily an attitude of the body. Every single word, whether it be in hebrew of the old testament or in greek of the new, they describe a physical attitude.

And I think we need to understand that worship is primarily an attitude. The three main attitudes that are spoken of in scripture are bowing the head, bowing the entire upper part of the body, and then prostrating yourself on your face on the ground. Those are the three primary pictures of worship.

When Moses returned from his absence of 40 years in the wilderness and brought to the elders of Israel the news that God was about to deliver them from Egypt. It says they bowed the head. That was an attitude and an act of worship.

They just bowed their heads in the presence of God. And so I believe that we need to think about worship always in terms of an attitude. Not merely a physical attitude, but also a spiritual attitude.

I often say to God when I'm alone, Lord I bow in my spirit before you. Praise is an utterance. Everything in the scripture shows that praise must come out of the mouth.

People sometimes talk about praising God in their heart. I won't say anything against that. But that's not the kind of praise the bible talks about.

The bible is very insistent and emphatic that praise must come out of the mouth. So praise is an utterance. Essentially we praise God for who he is.

Then thanksgiving, I believe, comes when we thank God for what he has done. I think there's a simple distinction there. We praise God for who he is.

We thank God for what he has done. Now that's not a hard and fast distinction. It's just a way of looking at the different aspects of a total relationship.

And then I think you could say that in worship, in praise and thanksgiving, we relate respectively to three different attributes of God's eternal nature. In worship we relate to God's holiness. In praise we relate to God's greatness.

And in thanksgiving we relate to God's goodness. Now I'd like to turn to Isaiah chapter 6 and look at a picture of worship and praise in heaven. This is the uncorrupted eternal pattern.

It describes a vision that Isaiah had. And in this vision he saw the Lord high and lifted up. Says his train filled the temple.

And then he saw the seraphim. The hebrew word is seraph. But the plural comes from adding im, seraphim.

So seraphim is a plural word. You can say seraphs or you can say seraphim. The word seraph is directly related to a primary hebrew verb which means to burn or to blaze.

So the seraphim are the burning, blazing, fiery creatures that immediately surround the throne of God. And this is how they worship and how they praise. I think it's very instructive.

Beginning in verse 2, above it, that's above the throne, stood the seraphim. Each one had six wings. With two he covered his face.

With two he covered his feet. With two he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. First we have the picture of worship, the attitude. Two wings covering the bowed face in the presence of almighty God.

Two wings covering the feet. And the remaining two wings used to fly with. Flying we could describe as service.

The covering of the face and the feet as worship. And notice the order and the proportion. Worship comes before service.

And it's twice as important as service. There are four wings for worship. Two wings to fly with.

I think that lines up with the answer that Jesus gave to Satan in the wilderness when he was being tempted. In Matthew 4:10, you don't need to turn there. Satan wanted to make a bargain with Jesus.

He showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in a moment of time. And he said, now all this is under my control. All you have to do is fall down and worship me.

And I'll hand it all over to you. And notice again, it's an attitude that he demanded of Jesus. To fall down before him.

And I want to say, we ought to be fearfully careful about any kind of attitude that represents worship in any way, that's directed to anyone but God. Sometimes the attitude of some people who follow pop singers and rock singers, almost transfers to a human being. Something that belongs uniquely and solely to God.

And it's terribly dangerous. Because the thing you worship, takes control of you. Whatever you worship, controls you.

The more you worship the true God, the more he controls you. But if you divert that worship in any other direction, the thing you begin to worship, will take control of you. But Jesus refused that bargain.

And he said, he quoted Deuteronomy. He said, it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. But notice again the order.

Before you serve, you worship. And I believe a great difference would come in our experience, all of us, myself included. We would never offer God service, without offering him worship first.

I think our service would be different. We do things better. And some things we do, we wouldn't do, if we began by worshipping God.

Now with that introduction, relating to worship, praise and thanksgiving. I want to spend the rest of the time this morning, on the theme of praise. I think one key verse, for me at any rate, is Psalm 48 verse 1. Psalm 48 and verse 1. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

Great is the Lord, and for that reason he is to be praised. Praise relates us to God's greatness. And he's to be praised, in proportion to his greatness.

Because he's great, he's to be greatly praised. And so I would say that, praise is the appropriate response to God's greatness. The Bible is full of exhortations to praise the Lord.

I've never tried to count them, but I imagine there must be several hundred. You might say, well why is God always demanding praise? Really God isn't demanding praise, he's giving us the privilege of praising him. Because praise is the only appropriate response to his greatness.

He's allowing us to make the correct and appropriate response, which is evoked by his greatness. Now I want to just give you a number of scriptural facts about praise. Probably about eight or ten.

And I won't dwell on any of these. One could dwell on any of them, and make a complete message out of them. But I want to give you a general overview, of the whole theme of praise this morning.

So I won't dwell on any particular section, at length. Turn to Psalm 22, if you want to follow in your Bibles. Verse three, the first thing I want to say is, that praise is God's address.

It's where he lives. So if you want to be where God lives, you're going to have to offer him praise. It's a very beautiful scripture.

It says, but thou art holy. O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Thou who lives in the praises of Israel.

The Hebrew word for to live in a place, is the same word for to sit. We won't go into all the reasons for this. But to sit somewhere, is to live somewhere.

A settlement, a living place, is a place of sitting. It's used in modern Hebrew. And I think we get the full idea, if we also include the thought of sitting.

God sits upon the praises of his people. And in the Swedish Bible, they've got this beautiful translation. Thou art holy, thou who art enthroned on the praises of Israel.

So praise is God's throne. He's a king, anyhow. We don't make him a king.

But when we praise him, we offer him his throne. We make him welcome. We recognize his kingship.

So praise is God's dwelling place, and his throne. And then again, praise is the way into God's presence. Psalm 100, Psalm 100, verse 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

Be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, his truth endureth to all generations. We notice their praise and thanksgiving, are put very close together.

And the way into God's gates, and into his courts, is with praise and thanksgiving. And then the scripture gives us three reasons, why we ought to praise God. In verse 5. The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, his truth endureth to all generations.

Now I want you to see that all those reasons, are always true. They never cease to be true. So there is never a situation, in which it is not appropriate to praise God, for those three reasons.

It doesn't depend on our visible situation or circumstances. It doesn't depend on our feelings. It's based on eternal, unchangeable facts.

God is good, his mercy is everlasting, his truth endures to all generations. That's true no matter what happens, anywhere on the earth. But if you want to get into God's presence, that's the gate, and there is no other.

If you're not willing to praise God, you can pray, you can cry out in your misery, like the lepers, who saw Jesus afar off and said, be merciful unto us. And he'll hear you cry, but you have no access. Access is only through praise.

Isaiah 60 and verse 18. We have this beautiful description description, of the place of God's dwelling, and his people's dwelling. Isaiah 60 verse 18.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders. But thou shall call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. So God lives in a city, surrounded by a wall, that's called salvation.

And the scripture is very clear and emphatic. In many places, the only way through that wall, is by the gate. It says no one will ever come any other way, but by the gates.

And every gate is what? Praise. In other words, no praise, no access to God's presence, and the place where his people dwell. Then again, praise is the purpose of God's blessing us.

It's what God gets back, out of what he does for us. Give you just two scriptures. Psalm 106 and verse 47.

Here's an inspired prayer. Save us O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. Notice again, thanksgiving and praise, closely joined together.

Why does God save us, and bring us together as his people, in fellowship with himself and one another. What does God want, as a response from us. It says to give thanks unto his name, and to triumph in his praise.

Now that's the King James translation. And I think it brings out something, which other translations leave out. We triumph in praising God.

There's a difference between a victory and a triumph. The victory is the winning of the battle. The triumph is the celebrating of the victory, that's already been won.

And in 2nd Corinthians 2 14, Paul says, God thanks, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ. God wants us not merely to have the victory, he wants us to celebrate it. He wants us to share the triumph.

How do we share the triumph? In what way? In his praise. The triumph was the highest honor, that the Roman senate could vote for a victorious general over the Roman army. And the essence of the triumph was this.

He would be placed in a chariot, led by a white horse. And then behind his chariot, would be laid all the evidences of his conquests. The kings and the generals, that have been taken all in chains.

And then long rows of prisoners of war. And then if there were animals in those territories, that the Romans were not familiar with. They'd have the wild animals behind too, like a tiger or something like that.

And there, there was the general in his chariot. And all the evidences of his victories, visibly stretched out behind him. And all the people of Rome lining the streets as he passed through, and applauding him.

Now that's a triumph. Some Christians, I think have got the impression that we are laid behind the chariot, with the enemies. I don't believe that.

I don't think that's a correct understanding of God's attitude towards his people. The Bible says we triumph in Christ. We're not in the train behind.

We're not on the sidewalks. Where are we? In the chariot. That's right.

How do we get there? Praise, that's right. We triumph in his praise. God gather us together, as he's gathered us here this morning.

That we may triumph in his praise. Sometimes it pays to stop praying and start praising. Because then you step up off the level of the sidewalk into the chariot.

And you know the victory has been won. One other scripture on this theme, Psalm 30. Just verses 11 and 12.

David had been through a long dark period in his life. I don't know that we understand all that he'd gone through. But I'm sure that there are many of us here, that could look back over things that are similar in our lives.

As a matter of fact the Lord made this a very vivid personal message to me, when I lost my wife. It actually was fulfilled in my experience. Thou hast turned for me, my mourning into dancing.

Thou has put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness. To the end that, notice this is the purpose. To the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. Notice again praise and thanksgiving in the same verse. But notice the purpose for which God does these things.

That our glory may give thanks unto him and not be silent. Now what is our glory? The bible leaves this without any doubt. If we compare two passages, one from the old and one from the new testament.

Psalm 16 verse 9. David is speaking again and he says, therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. But this psalm is quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2 verse 26. And this is how Peter quotes it.

And I want you to see that scripture, as so often, comments on scripture. So Peter is quoting Psalm 16, applying it to Jesus Christ. And this is what he says, therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad.

David said my heart is glad my glory rejoices. Peter said my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. What does that tell us? That my glory is what? My tongue, that's right.

When the bible says my glory will give thanks unto thee, it means my tongue will give thee thanks. And that's why David says and not be silent. What is the organ of the body that either speaks or is silent? It's the tongue.

So you see that your tongue is your glory. You know why? Why did God give you a tongue? What was the primary purpose for which you received a tongue? To do what? To praise God. So your tongue is your

glory, because above all the other members of your body, it's the one with which you may most perfectly praise and glorify God.

Remember God blesses you, he delivers you, he takes away your mourning and your sadness, to the end that your glory may give praise to him and not be silent. Very specific. Then again and we look at another aspect of praise.

Praise is a garment of the spirit. It's part of our spiritual clothing. Psalm 61 verse 3, it speaks about the coming of Messiah and what he came to do.

And it says without going into the background, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion. To give unto them beauty for ashes. Ashes being the emblem of mourning.

The oil of joy for mourning. Oil being always an emblem of the Holy Spirit. The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The garment of praise in place of the spirit of heaviness. The spirit of heaviness in modern English is depression. And many of you have heard me testify, how I struggled for years as a preacher, with the problem of depression.

And one day God gave me those words. The garment of praise in place of the spirit of heaviness. He showed me that my problem was a spirit, an evil spirit.

The spirit of heaviness. He showed me how to be delivered from it. And I was delivered.

And then he showed me how to keep free. To put on the garment of praise. When you wear the garment of praise, the spirit of heaviness finds someone else to bother.

Because you bother him, more than he bothers you. I remember the gang, I didn't mean to tell this story. But it's very vivid to me.

In London, when I was pastoring there. There were two Russian Jewish sisters, who'd been gloriously saved from atheism. Behind the, the borders of Russia during World War II.

Had escaped miraculously. Made their way to Israel. Met us there.

And later followed us to London. And though they were theoretically Baptists, they'd been baptized in the Holy Spirit. And they were more vociferous in praising God, than most Pentecostals in Britain at that time.

So these two sisters, and my wife and I were together in our home. Just worshiping and praising God and praying. And a sister in the congregation, turned up unexpected at the door.

With a man, whom she was leading by the hand. And she said, this is my husband, he's just come out of prison. Just like that.

And he needs deliverance, he's got an evil spirit. Well in those days, I didn't know anything about deliverance. And I didn't want to know anything.

And I was embarrassed. I thought, I wish she'd taken him somewhere else. But since I was the pastor, I really couldn't turn it down.

So I didn't know what to do. So I said, well we'll praise the Lord. And we all gathered around.

We began to praise the Lord really. And these Russian sisters, they, they didn't, they didn't mind if anybody heard them. After a while, this man, whom I'd never met before, sidled up to me.

And he said, I think I'm going, there's too much noise. And I wasn't ready with an answer. But I gave him one, I'm sure the Lord gave me.

I said, listen it's the devil that doesn't like the noise. Because we're praising Jesus and he can't bear that. And you've got two options.

If you go now, the devil will go with you. But if you stay, the devil will go without you. So I, so he said, I'll stay.

And sure enough, a little while later, he came up to me, as we were praising the Lord. He said, it's left, I just felt it go from my throat. That's always made it so vivid to me, that you really embarrass the devil.

When you praise Jesus. If you praise Jesus long enough, the devil cannot stand it. He'll have to go.

Just one other scripture on this garment of praise. How many of you ladies like to look in the mirror? Don't raise your hand. And I could say, how many of you men like to look in the mirror? And it'd probably be a larger proportion.

But in psalm 33, in verse 1, it says, rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. For praise is comely for the upright. Comely means beautiful.

So when you put on that garment of praise, in the spirit, you're looking your best. It suits you. It adorns you.

Don't forget that. Then again, praise is a way of deliverance. Psalm 50, the last verse.

King James version reads like this, Whoso offereth praise, glorifyeth me, it's God who's speaking. And to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God. That I believe it would be legitimate, somewhat free, but legitimate to re-translate that this way.

Whoso offers praise, glorifies me, and prepares a way that I may show him my salvation. I believe that through praising God, we open the way for him to demonstrate his salvation, to intervene supernaturally on our behalf. There are many examples of that in scripture.

The intervention of God that is brought about by praise. Turn to 2nd Chronicles chapter 20, for a moment. Verses 21 and 22.

This describes the situation in the history of Judah, when a strong alien army was invading them. And King Jehoshaphat realized that he did not have the military resources to meet this army. So he resorted to spiritual weapons instead.

And after various things had happened, before they marched out to the battle, in accordance with God's instructions, this is what they did. 2nd Chronicles 20, verse 21. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness.

As they went out before the army, and to say praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever. Now that, many people have pointed out, that's a strange battle strategy. Instead of sending out the tanks first, they send out the choir, to praise God.

Sounds crazy, but they'd had one advantage, it worked. What happened when they began to praise the Lord? Says in verse 22, when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten. Or the alternative translation is, they began to smite one another.

So when they praised the Lord, God's people praised the Lord, God intervened, and dealt with the enemy. And you read the rest of the story, they didn't have to use a single material weapon. All they had to do was go out and strip the bodies of the spoil, and there was so much spoil, it took them three days to gather it.

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