

The Soundtrack of Life

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of maintaining a consistent soundtrack of praise to God, regardless of life's circumstances.

Duration: 26:25

Scripture: Psalm 34:1

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of not making hasty decisions when under pressure. He shares personal experiences of feeling distracted and diverted when faced with emergencies or burdens. The speaker emphasizes the need to stay focused on God and not panic, even when things seem to be falling apart. He also highlights the importance of understanding different seasons in life and knowing when to change our approach or actions. Overall, the message encourages listeners to seek wisdom from God and make decisions based on His guidance rather than succumbing to fear or pressure.

Transcript

No matter what you do in life, there's different events, conversations, and all of that. For every person, there's a soundtrack to their life. Here's the verse that I want to give you.

Psalm 34, verse one and two. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Verse two, my soul shall make its boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Number three, oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

Let's go back to verse one. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Let's analyze that. I will bless the Lord. Most times we think of the Lord blessing us.

How could a human bless the Lord because he doesn't need anything? How do you bless the Lord? Well, when humans bless the Lord, that word means I will praise the Lord. I will thank the Lord. I will remember the goodness of the Lord.

I will extol the Lord. I will elevate the Lord and remind myself and let others know how great is God. I will bless the Lord.

I will praise him. I will thank him. I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Notice the two other factors in that little couplet there. I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. How many times will I bless the Lord? At all times. How often will I do it? Continually.

The subscription on the Psalms, sometimes you'll see in your Bibles, Psalm 34, Psalm 27, whatever, and then some of them have below a Psalm of David when he was doing such and such, when he was in such and such place. Now those subscriptions, those little descriptions, are not inspired that we take it with the rest of the text. The text is inspired.

Those subscriptions or descriptions of when it was written, and the experts say some of them seem very accurate and describe times in David's life or one of the other psalmist's life. A Psalm of Moses. A Psalm of Asaph, who was a worship leader.

This one says that this was written by David when he was being chased by Saul, King Saul, who was jealous of him and hated him, and was just about to kill him. And David had to find a place to hide, and he went to the Philistines. And he broke down in his faith when he was there, and he was so frightened that the Philistines would kill him but he's running from King Saul, where can you go? And he had slain a lot of Philistines and he killed Goliath, their champion.

So the Bible says that when he got there, he went like, as it were, from the frying pan into the fire so he feigned or made believe that he was crazy. And he began to drool and write on the wall. It's true, it's found in the scriptures that he did that.

They're linking that Psalm with this at this time. In other words, David did that. God, in his mercy, doesn't save us because we're always doing the right thing.

He saves us because he's a great God. Can we all put our hands together and say amen to that? How many have had times in your life when God showed you mercy when you were totally out of whack? Come on, lift up your hand. Totally out there, totally doing crazy things.

Totally lost your faith for the moment. But notice here what's encouraging. God doesn't look at a moment's weakness.

David had that. God looks at the train of a life, the direction of a life, the current of a life, which way a life is going. Because even for the best people who love God and praise him, there are breakdowns at a given moment.

We've all had them, amen? It seems if this subscription is true, it seems as if David came to his senses, saw the Lord delivered him, saw how stupid what he was doing was because God had told him, you're gonna sit on the throne. If you're gonna sit on the throne and that's what God said, then how could the king of the Philistines kill you? But you see, even though God has spoken things to us, sometimes we break down and we do things we shouldn't do because we go into panic mode. I was just counseling a pastor today on the phone from a faraway place and I said, brother, you're asking me my advice? Don't make that decision.

Maybe this is for you today. Don't make that decision because you're under pressure. And when we're under pressure and we're frightened like what will happen, that's when you can really make bad decisions.

When you're under pressure, under the gun, feeling all the heat, sometimes you just, I gotta lean on something, I gotta do something. And if you're not careful, you can really do something crazy. That's probably how David got to that place.

He saw the Philistines looking at him, licking their chops. We got David here, finally. And then he went bonkers on them and he acted like he was crazy.

So when he came to his senses, he saw how good God was. Oh, God is good. God's not only good when we're faithful, God is good when we're unfaithful.

God is not only good when the sun is shining, when the storms are raging, God is still good. God is not only good to us when our friends are helping us, God is good to us when people let us down. God is not only good when your spouse is treating you nicely, God is still good when your spouse is having a bad day or a bad week.

God is good. So David says, I'm gonna bless the Lord, not when things are going good, I'm gonna bless the Lord at all times. I'm gonna be praising Him and thanking Him all the time, 24-7.

The soundtrack of my life is gonna be, I will bless the Lord, I will praise the Lord. Thank you, God, you are a good God. Well, there's a problem over there.

Yeah, God will get to that problem, but I will bless the Lord. I will praise the Lord. The undertone of his life, even when he was busy doing things, was an undertone, a soundtrack of praise.

He was praising God continually. I will bless the Lord at all times. There are, one of the signs of maturity in a Christian is if their soundtrack stays the same even though life goes up and down.

There are some of us, hey, listen, are we good at praising God when He comes through? Are we not good? Some of us have come to the place where we just celebrate God's goodness and we praise God, but the test is when it's not going good. Are you still gonna praise God? Is God still worthy of our worship and our thanksgiving? Or do we stop because we don't know what's happening and it looks bad? You know, I had a friend who loved this restaurant and he used to tell me, you gotta eat at this restaurant. He took me to the place once.

It was a pretty good restaurant. And then I went by it. He goes there to eat all the time.

So I went by it the other time and I was with him and I said, oh, that's the restaurant you like to go to. And he said, no, I don't go there anymore. I said, we used to sing praise at that restaurant all the time.

He told me about that restaurant. He said, no, they changed a chef. How many know in a restaurant they change a chef? You got a different restaurant.

Same table, same chairs, same glasses, different comida, different food. He was saying, no. I said, wow, big change.

He said, yeah, I went in there and had two horrible meals. They're preparing it different. See, but God never changes.

We never can stop praising him, never stop thanking him because he never changes. He was good, he is good, he will be good. He was faithful, he is faithful, he will be faithful.

Come on, can we put our hands together? We praise God all the time, continually. I will bless the Lord. I want to grow up.

How many want to get more mature in our spiritual life where we're praising? Here's one of the tests. When you meet people who are fluctuating up and down, they're manic depressives when it comes to praise, bipolar, up one day, down the other. God is great, God doesn't exist.

I'm happy, I'm depressed. No, no, the sign of a mature person is no matter what's going on. One more time, let's praise him.

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. As I close, notice this.

It's not just praise, and it comes from the heart. God only wants praise from the heart, but it's vocal. I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my, not just in my heart. God inspires people through the ages to praise him out loud. Is there a time to be still and know that he is God? Yes, but the general rule is God loves to be praised vocally.

Can we do it at all times where we're working and wherever? No, sometimes I'm more convenient than others. But really, during the day, there's always time to say, praise God. How many just give a praise God once in a while during the day? Just praise God.

Hallelujah, praise God. I love you, Lord. I praise you, God.

All right, what was that problem? Let me work on that. Then you go back to what you're doing. But when you have those breaks in life, the soundtrack of your life is praise God.

Hallelujah. In the good times, praise his name. In the bad times, do the same.

In everything, give him thanks, bless him. And do it vocally. Some of you have grown up in situations or churches where you have been taught and it's formed strong holes in your mind in terms of thought patterns that you act different when you praise God than you do normally.

You get excited, you get vocal about so many things. Don't we all? And then when it comes to God, shh. But that's nowhere found in the Bible.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. So we're gonna close. We're gonna give God praise.

It's good to be loud sometimes and praise God. See, there's a season for everything. There's a season to be quiet.

There's a season to study the Bible. And one of the things in life I was just thinking about today, one of the signs of the wisdom we need is when to change the season. I was thinking about that.

First of all, you have to understand seasons. Can't be doing the same thing every day. In a service, you can't just sing all meeting long.

We never hear the word. But if all you did is preach, we'd never have praise. But then there's time to pray for requests.

But then you have to take an offering to support missionaries and do other things. So when do you stop one and when do you do the other? That takes wisdom from leadership, whoever's guiding the meeting, of when to change the season. See, you can cut off the spirit.

If the spirit is leading us all to praise God like we were, Carol encouraged you all because she knew that this is the season God wants in the meeting to really praise him. But there comes an end to that. Or there'd be nothing else, but we'd walk in here, sing, and go home.

There's other things God wants us to do. And to know when to change those seasons, to when in life, you know what? I need to read the word. I read the word.

I talk to God. I need time to talk to God. You know, I need fellowship with people.

I gotta call someone. No, I need to serve them somehow. No, I need to go to choir practice.

And to know when to change those seasons every day. Very subtle thing, but very important. But the undercurrent is always praise God.

Praise God. I love to be around people who are praising God, who are happy in Jesus. Because when you're with people who are not happy in Jesus, and they're Christians, they can drain the life out of you.

Can they not? You almost don't, I say this sadly, you almost are leery of being around them because you know what you're gonna hear. The glass is always half full. There's always something wrong in the house of the Lord.

There's always people doing what they shouldn't do. Gloom and doom is coming. You actually have to have a prayer meeting when you leave them to just get back.

Come on, how many know what I'm talking about? Say amen. But when you're with a person, now I close, when you're with a person who has this soundtrack of praise, look what happens, verse two. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord.

In the Hebrew there, the emphatic part in the actual Hebrew of that sentence is in the Lord my soul will make its boast. The emphasis, according to the language experts, is in the Lord my soul shall make its boast, which means, that word boast means in the Hebrew language, the thing that means more to me than anything else in the world, the thing that I'll talk about, the thing that I'll brag on more than anything in the world is not what I've done, not what somebody gave me, not my family, my country, where I was born. The number one thing that I will boast in is the Lord.

The Lord is my boast. I'm gonna brag on the Lord. Yeah, I love my grandkids, I'll brag on them.

Here's a picture. Take out your phone, show them the, right. I'm thankful for all those things, but my number one bragging, my number one boasting, oh, I'm gonna boast in the Lord.

I was born in Trinidad, and that's good. Everything is vikey vi, everything is in order and happening, but that's not my boast. Trinidad, Roti is not my boast.

My boast is in the Lord. Come on, how many say amen? My boast is not in my race, not where I was raised, what food I ate, I'm not gonna glorify my heritage. My number one boast is gonna be Jesus.

Jesus, I brag on Jesus. But notice what happens here, the next phrase. The humble shall hear of it and be glad.

Now that word humble is translated also meek, but it also could mean the weak or the hurting or the damaged. The damaged will hear of it and be glad. This is an amazing thing about praising the Lord.

When you and I praise the Lord and have that spirit and verbally praise the Lord and brag on him, David is saying it has an effect on other people. David is saying here, the damaged, the wounded, the hurting people will hear me praising God and hear how he delivered me and hear my song and they're gonna be encouraged. David's gonna say, if he did it for him, he could do it for me.

Look at how that guy is praising God and he was so close to death and she lost her job, but look what God did and now she's praising God. It has an effect on other people. Do you know why God uses the choir when they're at their best? I say this not to boast in them, but I boast in the Lord because carol's been used by God and the choir's learned from God.

They're singing not to you. Do you never notice that they're never singing to you? The last thought they have is to perform, at least the way I have viewed them. And I've been all kinds of churches around the world where choirs perform.

They're not performing for anyone. They're singing to him. Sometimes I wonder if they're even looking at her leading and I wonder how they keep their tempo and everything.

They're singing to the Lord. And when you see people praise God, it has an effect on you. How many know exactly what I'm talking about? It's like you wanna praise God and it's like you get reminded, oh, God is good.

Well, how do you, why are you reminded of that? Because you see somebody just singing for the glory of God. Oh, the wounded and the meek and the lowly will hear my praise and they're gonna be encouraged. Their hearts are gonna be made glad.

And then he goes on to say, oh, magnify the Lord with me. Notice he goes from I will do this and then he just gets caught up because when you start praising God, you want others to join you. That's why you love to come to church because you don't pray to God all the time alone in a kitchen or in a subway.

You wanna be with other people who are praising God. These are all signs of a healthy spiritual life. The undercurrent, the underscoring, the soundtrack is not groaning and moaning and all of that but it's praise God, he's good.

I know, but I heard, yeah, I'm going through that but God is so good. I'm gonna count my blessings instead of my problems because God has shown me time after time, God is good. He is faithful, praise God.

Then you do things, you do this, you have a dinner, oh, I praise God for the food and then I praise God. I'm alive today, praise God. How many are happy you're alive today? Just lift your hand.

I got, look, blessings, blessings, blessings, blessings. How embarrassed I was at one time in Lima, Peru speaking at a conference when all these pastors who had gone out into the jungles and the mountains to

go start churches with nothing, they had me speaking every morning and then at night for a couple days in a row. So after the morning session, they were there and they weren't dressed in their suits and like they were the night before, they were more casual.

It was hot but that tradition in that place was you wear suits and all of that which was fine, I'll do whatever they like. I was walking through where the campgrounds were and I went into this side yard and I see all of these white shirts, blue shirts hung up and jackets hanging out to be aired, socks hanging and I said to someone, what is all this? They said, oh, the pastors, they only have one suit. They only have one white shirt or one blue shirt, one dress shirt.

So every morning they have to go out and wash it because you get all sweaty praising the Lord when it's 95 degrees and there's no AC and there's everything was hung and their socks, why? Because that night, they wanted to be right and be ready to praise God or whatever and then the next morning, wash the same shirt, just one shirt. They only had one shirt, one shirt. I left with an empty suitcase.

I looked around at people who I thought could wear my clothes and left everything, every tie, every suit, everything. How in the world can you go back when you see people only have one shirt, right? But guess what? They were praising the Lord. We have 25 shirts.

Some of you ladies have so many shoes, you don't even know how many shoes you have and they were praising God and we're complaining because we can't find the one we want or what's, there's a new shoe or the shoe with the red bottom and all of that and all these things I hear people talking about and here they were just praising God. Oh, I love to be around people who are praising God. They had little but listen, they had more because when you have a heart of praise, you have more than anybody and if you have a lot and you're not praising God, what good is it, right? So magnify the Lord with me.

I'm gonna stole the Lord with my mouth. We're gonna praise God. Let's just all lift up our hands and open our mouths and just start praising God out loud for how good he's been to you.

Remembering all that he's done for you. When you were doing wrong or doing something crazy and God was still faithful. He's still supplied for us.

We praise you, God. We praise you, God. We honor you, God.

We bless you, God. We praise you, God. Help us to praise you continually, Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times. Use our mouths and our voices, Lord, to make praise for you, to give you honor and glory, Lord. Open our mouths, Lord.

Take away complaining. Take away negativity. Take away criticism and fill us with praise and honor and glory to our God, Lord.

We bless your name. You may put your hands down. Lord, if we stayed till three in the morning, we still couldn't praise you enough, God.

For all that you've done, giving us your son, washing away all our sins, there's no record in heaven of any wrong thing we've ever done. How could that be? Because of your grace, because of your love. I ask you to forgive us, God, for being grumpy and complaining, murmuring.

We don't want to murmur. We want to praise you. Give us a new soundtrack for our lives.

Give us a new backdrop to everything we do so that the minute we stop doing whatever we're doing, even if it's agonizing over a wayward child, the moment we stop and divert our minds, we start praising you again. Because you weren't good and now have changed. You are always good.

You were faithful. You are faithful. You will be faithful.

And we want to thank you publicly, God, for your faithfulness to this church. Over all these decades, the bills you have helped us pay, the things you have brought us through, the way you've directed us, the people that you've put together, the choir you've formed, the deacons you've formed, the great pastoral staff, Lord, that is here, the sound people, the people who clean the building, the prayer band, the keepers of God's house, BT Kids, visitation ministry, all these things, going to prison, all these things. Oh, God, we praise you for that.

That comes from you. It doesn't come from a pastor. It doesn't come from some vision someone has.

It comes from you, Lord. We give you all the praise. Let's put our hands together and praise God for all his faithfulness to us.

We praise you, God. Blessed be your name forever and ever and ever and ever. How many are going to keep praising God now more than ever before? Say aloud amen.

And that goes, that goes for the choir behind me and for all of us. I don't want to preach about praise. I want to do praise.

I don't want them to just sing about praise and then the other days when they're not here, they're all mopey and down. I don't want us to just get worked up by music. I want that to be, don't you want to make God happy all the time by just, I will bless the Lord at all times.

His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord. The wounded, the hurt, the poor will hear and be encouraged.

Their hearts will be made glad. Just one last thing. How many times has this happened? I could give you, before the Lord, I could give you 100 incidents quickly probably if I searched my mind.

But it just happened the other day. I heard some news or some burden or someone came to me after the nine o'clock service and everything's falling apart and I had to see them. It was an emergency some months ago.

Between the services when I'm preaching, I like to try to rest, but you have to do what you have to do and you want to help people. But it distracted me and it pulled me down a little bit. I got a little diverted and distracted.

So now the 12 o'clock service, they're praying, Freddie's leading and the choir's here. And I came down in the elevator and I was preoccupied. I was distracted.

You ever get like that? You're just not, I'm not focused on God like I should have been. The door opened, I walked in. I don't know her name, but I know her face.

I've seen her a thousand times in church. I walked in, you all were praising God. And she had her hands up, but just a certain way.

And I opened the door and the first thing I heard was the music, you all singing so loud. And I saw this lady praising God. Listen, she didn't know I was gonna come.

She didn't know I would look at her. She was in another world. She was praising God.

She was worshiping in spirit and in truth. Her soul was magnifying the Lord. As God is my witness, I didn't even look at her for three seconds and my heart just burst up with praise.

And faith came up in me and I couldn't wait till I got through and I put my Bible down and started to sing with all my heart. And here I was just in an elevator, distracted and a little bit down, to be quite honest with you. Was disappointed by what I had heard in this thing.

And then that one lady praising God, and she never looked at me. She didn't even know the effect she had on me. So let's keep praising God.

Half the world is depressed. If we're depressed with them, how are we gonna be a good advertisement for Jesus, right? Let's be happy, let's be praising God. Let's be thanking Him, no matter what we see or hear.

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