

# (Basics) 26. Crucifixion and Praise

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of heartfelt praise rooted in the crucifixion of Christ and the necessity of self-denial for genuine worship.*

**Duration:** 12:55

**Scripture:** Psalm 22:1-118, Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10-11, Hebrews 2:12

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Praise Worship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of praising God as a key to overcoming difficult situations in life. He compares praising God to having a master key that can unlock any door. However, he warns against treating praise as a technique or empty ritual, emphasizing the need for genuine praise that comes from a crucified heart. The speaker also highlights the power of God to turn even the worst situations into something good, using the crucifixion of Jesus as an example. He encourages listeners to have a spirit of praise rather than just speaking empty words.

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## Transcript

And we want to continue looking at this wonderful key of praising God through which we prepare a throne for God in our hearts and through which we can escape from any situation that we ever find ourselves in the world. In our last study about this wonderful key that God has given us, it's like a master key, you know, that can open every door. Isn't it wonderful to have a key in your hands through which you can unlock yourself and get out of any tight corner or any situation? That you find yourself in some difficult situation, some problem, some difficult people perhaps and here you have a master key.

What's that? To enthrone God on our praises. It's not a technique. If you try it as a technique, I guarantee you right now it'll fail.

Technique is something that we adopt selfishly. We want something and we think if we repeat certain words like some type of mantra or magic it will work. It doesn't work like that.

I'm not talking about words. You know, God has no interest in words if they don't come from our hearts. I'm not talking about praise alone.

I'm talking about praise that comes from a heart that has faith in God and His sovereign power and in His perfect love and in His infinite wisdom. See, faith indicates that you believe that God is full of love, full of

wisdom, full of power and when you believe that you will sing His praise. And as we saw last time in Psalm 22, verse 3, praise is the throne on which God sits.

Now Psalm 22, by the way, is a psalm about the cross of Calvary. It begins with these words, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Jesus spoke those words when He was hanging on the cross. And then it speaks about God being enthroned on the praises of His people in the third verse.

And then it refers to Jesus' hands and feet being pierced in verse 16. It's very obviously a message of the cross, a psalm of the cross. And then as you continue in the psalm, from this crucified position, Jesus invites His younger brothers, that's you and me, to join Him in verse 21 to prepare a throne of praise for the Father.

See that in verse 22, I will tell of your name to my brethren in the midst of the assembly I'll praise thee. That's the verse which is quoted in Hebrews chapter 2 as referring to Jesus praising the Father. So it's very interesting to see that this verse of praise comes in the midst of a psalm which is speaking about Jesus being crucified, His hands and feet being pierced.

Now the crucifixion of Jesus was the worst evil that was ever committed on this earth. There was never a greater sin committed by any other human being than the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We can say that took place on earth.

Do you agree with me? Yeah it's true. Now let me ask you another question. What do you think was the best event that ever took place on this earth in 6,000 years of man's history? The answer is again the same, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Was there a better thing that took place on earth than the crucifixion of Christ? If it were not for that our sins would not be forgiven there wouldn't be any radio program today that you're listening to. No, it's the crucifixion of Christ which is the best event and we earlier saw it was the worst sin that man committed. So it was the worst thing and it was the best thing.

What does that show? The worst thing that man could do, God turned into the very best thing of all. Now once you understand that you'll realize that whatever other people may do to you is certainly not as bad as the crucifixion of Jesus and if God could turn that evil thing into something good tell me what is there that other people can do to you which God cannot turn for good? Everything is less than that. Nothing can happen to you worse than the crucifixion of Jesus and that worst thing God turned into the very best and that teaches us something about God's almighty power.

That's why we praise Him. That's why right in the middle of this psalm which is the psalm of the cross we find I will praise you. Do you feel like praising God when you're crucified? What do you think the thieves were doing when they were hanging on the cross? They were not praising God.

They were cursing and swearing and probably biting the hands of the soldiers who were crucifying them and spitting at them and they were not at all happy but can you imagine how Jesus was crucified? He must have opened his palms and cooperated with them when they drove the nails in, put his legs one on top of the other so that they could drive the nails in more easily. He was happy. Why was he happy? Didn't he suffer? Oh he suffered, sure.

He felt the pain of crucifixion just as much as you and I would feel it. Then why was he happy? He was happy that he was doing the will of his father. You know when we do the will of our father it doesn't matter

if we suffer.

We can still be happy. We may feel pain. Jesus felt pain but he was happy and that's why he could praise the father hanging on the cross and this is the way.

This is the secret. The bible says it's not only Jesus Christ who was crucified on Calvary. Do you know somebody else who was crucified on the same cross as Jesus? I don't mean on either side of him like the thieves.

Tell me somebody else who was crucified on the same cross as Jesus was crucified. It's not so well known among Christians by the way. Every Christian knows that Jesus died on the cross on Calvary but if you were to ask them who else died with him on that same cross they don't know the answer but the answer is given us in two places at least in scripture.

In Romans chapter 6 we read in Romans chapter 6 and verse 6 that our old man was also crucified with Christ on the cross and Paul says in Galatians 2 20 applying it personally to himself he says I am crucified with Christ. I have been crucified with Christ. So it's not only Jesus who died on the cross in some wonderful way God who knew that one day you and I would also give our lives to Christ he took us because he knew the future and put us into Christ and we were crucified with him.

We have died with Christ. It's not only that our sins were placed on Christ on the cross we ourselves have been placed on that cross and now crucified with Christ we praise God. See that's a different type of praise than the hollow empty words of praise that sometimes people make noises and shouting which is meaningless.

Why do I say it's meaningless? Praise is a spirit. You can't just switch it on Sunday morning for two hours and switch it off when you go home. If you say hallelujah praise the Lord on Sunday morning in the meeting and then go home and shout at your wife on Sunday afternoon.

Do you have the spirit of praise? Certainly not. That's something you switch on and switch off. It's not a spirit of praise.

It's a form. It's a tradition and that's all a lot of people have. That's hollow.

You know there's a verse in the old testament where God says these people draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far away from me. Their hearts seek their own. So it's easy to draw near to God with our lips and God doesn't care for that.

He doesn't listen to a lot of praise that is spoken out on Sunday mornings from different parts of the world. You know what he listens to? He listens to the people who have a spirit of praise and not just words. Words can be empty.

Words can be a ritual. There are a lot of people who say they love Jesus in the same spirit that Judas Iscariot kissed Jesus in Gethsemane. Judas Iscariot kissed Jesus.

Wasn't that a sign of love and affection and friendship? But he was betraying Him. And in the same way many people stand up Sunday morning and praise the Lord and say hallelujah but it's not in their hearts. If you want praise to come into your heart you have to be crucified with Christ.

You have to say Lord I die to myself. I want to show you another psalm which is also a psalm of the cross and that will just confirm what I've been trying to say to you. You know God's word is powerful and that's why we need to turn to God's word again and again.

Man's words are not as powerful as God's words. In Psalm 118 if you read verses 11 to 14 it speaks about they surrounded me like bees and in the name of the Lord I'll cut them off. It is a psalm of the cross and then it says in the stone which the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone.

That's a word that Jesus quoted in the Gospels. You read that in Matthew 21 42 and Mark 12 verse 10 and 11. That's a word that Jesus quoted concerning himself.

When did the builders reject the stone? That was on Calvary. They said we don't want him to reign over us. We will not have this man to reign over us.

Crucify him and they rejected him but there hanging on the cross crucified the Lord says in verse 28 I give thanks to thee I will extol thee give thanks to the Lord for he is good this is the day verse 24 which the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it was the day on which Jesus was crucified a day which the Lord has made I mean to say this is the day the Lord has made when you get an increment or a promotion in your job or a better salary or a better job or when you get married or get a better house or some earthly benefit that's very easy to say this is the day which the Lord has made but to say this is the day which the Lord has made when somebody crucifies you that requires faith which is the day which the Lord has not made is there any day in the year which the Lord has not made every day is a day which the Lord has made the devil doesn't make any days I'll tell you that and if this is the day which the Lord has made we're going to rejoice and be glad in it whether we get a large gift or whether we get crucified it doesn't make a difference because we believe in the sovereignty of God and so we find in both these psalms psalm 22 and psalm 118 this great truth that it's only as I'm willing to die to my self-life as only I'm willing to die to my self which is always seeking its own that I can enter into a spirit of praise and then my praise to God on Sunday mornings will be meaningful it'll come from my heart and I will not have to live a double life where I'm a holy person on Sunday morning and behave like a devil on Sunday evening no I can be genuine through and through and so it's not just faith that's connected with praising God being crucified with Christ is also connected with praising God we're trying to lay a good foundation so that our life of praise will be on solid foundation

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