

(Basics) 30. Praise Opens Closed Doors

by Zac Poonen

Praise is a powerful key that opens closed doors and brings freedom from life's challenges through faith in God.

Duration: 12:57

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 20:17, Psalm 50:23, Jonah 1:17, Jonah 2:9, Matthew 6:33, Acts 16:25-26, Romans 10:11

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Power Of Praise"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the message of not being afraid and trusting in God's power. He uses the example of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20, who admitted his powerlessness and looked to God for help. The preacher also highlights the promise in Romans 10:11 that those who believe in the Lord will never be disappointed. He further discusses the story of Jonah, who praised God while in the belly of a fish, showing the power of praise to deliver from difficult situations. The sermon concludes with the encouragement to have faith and trust in God, knowing that he will never disappoint and will ultimately set his children free.

Transcript

And we want to take one more study this time on this wonderful key of praise which opens every door and which can set us free from situations which are like prisons. In our last study we were looking at 2 Chronicles chapter 20. It's one of the finest illustrations in the entire Bible of how the spirit of praise can defeat the enemy and deliver you from situations when you are surrounded by problems which you don't know how to handle.

Faith always brings praise. Jesus said if you believe nothing can be impossible to you. When you trust in God you will never be disappointed.

Man may disappoint you but God will never disappoint you. I mean he may take time to answer your prayer. And take time before he solves your problem and opens the prison door.

But he'll definitely do it. One day. He doesn't want his children to be bound.

He wants his children to be free in their spirits. I mean in their bodies. They may be locked up.

Paul was locked up. Peter was locked up. They were even killed.

But in their spirits, in your spirit, God always wants you to be like the birds in the air. Flying. Like the eagles.

Flying in the air. And that comes through the spirit of praise. You know the eagle flapping its wings and rising up is a picture of a Christian praising God with all his heart.

Just one or two things I want to point out to you from 2 Chronicles 20. This place where Jehoshaphat was surrounded by so many enemies that there were far too many for him to handle. God allows us to face situations where we see that we are absolutely helpless.

We are weak. You know once when Jesus spoke about prayer. He pictured the church as a poor, helpless, old widow.

In Luke chapter 18. Who was being harassed by some enemy. Can you picture this in your mind? A poor, helpless, old widow being harassed by some strong man or men.

And she has no man in the house. No husband. No sons.

And she doesn't know what to do. And these men are harassing her maybe for rent or turning her out of the house or not giving her her own property back. Something like that.

And she goes to a judge. And asks the judge to help her. Now what is the picture we have there of the church? The church is not a mighty, strong, muscular he-man.

No. The church Jesus pictured like a helpless widow. Are we like that? Yes we are.

God has made the church weak on earth. So that it will depend on the Lord. You know in the early days the Christians were thrown to the lions.

Well they couldn't defend themselves physically against the might of the Roman Empire. But in their spirits they were free. So God allows us to be weak because it is only when we are weak that we can exercise faith in Him.

Otherwise we tend to depend on our own resources. So God allowed so many enemies to come around Jehoshaphat. We read in 2nd Chronicles 20 verse 2. That he said Lord we are powerless.

I mean if one or two enemies had come. He wouldn't have said that. But God allowed so many to come.

That he said Lord we are helpless. We just can't handle this. I mean if it were one or two we could have handled it.

But not this. When you are defeated by sin. Overcome by Satan.

You say that's because you are weak. No my friend. It's not because you are weak.

It's because you are strong. You are so strong. That's why you are defeated.

If you were weak you would turn to God. You would experience God's help. And you would be an overcomer.

Only weak people can praise God. Strong people praise themselves. And so we see that a strong person is one who has got strong opinions.

He speaks strong stinging words to other people. You are quick to judge other people. Are you like that? Then you are not weak.

A weak person is like supposing you go to a hospital. And you see a man with tubes in his mouth and nose. And helpless.

Hardly able to speak. That's a weak person. You don't see him there.

Criticizing others. No. It's when he gets healthy and strong that he again starts blaming others.

And blaming the doctors and the nurses. And his enemies and relatives. And starts speaking stinging words and judging others.

That's when he has recovered his strength. But when he is weak, he doesn't say a thing. He is just lying there helpless.

What are you like? Aren't you strong? It's strong people who are defeated. Because we read in 2 Corinthians 12.9 God says, My strength is made perfect in weak people. In people who are weak.

That's why God allows us to become weak. When you argue and dispute with people. What are you? Weak or strong? You are strong.

And strong people are easy targets for Satan. He always wins the battle with those who argue. That's how he won the battle with Eve.

And so, God allows us to become weak. You know, that's what we learn in the story of Lazarus. We read that when Jesus got a message that Lazarus was dying.

He said, Well, we'll just wait a little and go on to see him later. Why would he do that? Because as long as Lazarus was sick, he was still a bit strong. Gradually, his strength weakened, weakened, weakened.

Till one day, he died. Then he had become really weak. And then God raised him up.

What's the lesson from that? That God has to make us weak. Before he can do his work in us. And when Jehoshaphat came to that place and he said, We are powerless.

2 Chronicles 20 verse 12 And when he said, We don't know what to do. But our eyes are on you. We're expecting you to work on our behalf.

And God did. Now, there are three categories of believers in the world. Listen carefully and see which category you belong to.

First, those who have a tremendous confidence in themselves. They are very strong. They know the Bible. They pray. They fast. They're capable.

And they're strong. And they have a lot of confidence in themselves. In their own abilities.

Or maybe they don't pray. Or they don't fast. But they are strong in themselves.

Powerful personalities. Such believers can never do an eternal work for God. And then there's another category of believers.

And that is those who have no confidence in themselves. And no confidence in God either. They may say they have no strength.

They're weak. They're helpless. They're sinners.

They're good for nothing. And they also don't believe that God will ever do anything with them or through them. Because they feel God cannot do much.

And such believers are also useless to God. Now, here is the third category of believers. The ones who are really useful to God.

Those who have no confidence in themselves. But total confidence in God. Those who say like, Josh, but we have no strength.

We have no wisdom. But we're trusting you, Lord. We don't know how to handle this situation.

But we are trusting you to handle it. And remember this. Just to say that we're weak doesn't solve the problem.

You must also trust God. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. To merely confess that we are rotten and good for nothing and foolish.

That's not humility. That's just unbelief. Jesus never confessed that type of thing.

Jesus was the humblest person who walked on the earth. It's when they finally said, Lord, we trust you. Do you know what the prophet said? We read in 2 Chronicles 20, verse 15.

A prophet got up there and God sent his message through the prophet saying, Don't be afraid. The battle is not yours. But God's.

And you don't have to fight in this battle. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf. Stand still.

Verse 17. See what God is going to do for you. And to whom does God speak such words today? To those who say, Lord, we're weak but we are trusting in you.

They will never, never be disappointed or put to shame. Do you know that wonderful promise in Romans 9? And verse 33. The last part of that verse.

He who believes in the Lord will never be disappointed. What a wonderful verse. He who believes in the Lord will never be disappointed.

And they went out. And we read here, they began to praise the Lord. And the enemy was thoroughly defeated.

Now we see another example of this in the book of Jonah. In Jonah and chapter 2. We read, you know the story of Jonah, don't you? He was disobeying God and running away from God. And he got onto a ship to go in the opposite direction of where God wanted him to go.

And God stopped him by getting those people to throw him out of that ship. And as soon as he was thrown out of the ship, there was a big fish that swallowed him up. We read that in Jonah 1.17. The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah.

And Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights. What did he do during those three days and three nights? We're not told. Perhaps he was struggling to get out of that fish's stomach.

Because it says in chapter 2, verse 1, Then, after the three days and three nights, he began to pray. Now, very often, that's how we are also. When we get into a problem, maybe in some type of fish's belly we've got ourselves locked up in, in the beginning we don't pray.

We try to get out somehow or the other. Sometimes for many days or weeks. And when everything fails, then we start to pray.

And that's what Jonah also did. For three days and three nights he did nothing. He tried.

But every time he tried to come out of the whale's mouth, he just slipped back in. And then he began to pray. You see, like I said, God waits till we come to the end of ourselves.

The same lesson here. Then Jonah prayed. And he prayed and he prayed and he prayed and still nothing happened.

That's the other thing we see. And then finally, in verse 9, he began to thank the Lord. He said, With the voice of thanksgiving, I will sacrifice to you.

And then we read in verse 10, Then the Lord commanded the fish to vomit Jonah out on the dry land. When did the Lord command the fish to do that? When Jonah began to praise the Lord. This is the fulfillment of Psalm 50, verse 23.

He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving, the same thing mentioned here in verse 9, Jonah 2, 9, makes a way by which I can show him my deliverance. Look at another final example in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16. There we read of the Apostle Paul and Silas being locked up in a jail.

What did they do in the jail? Instead of sleeping and instead of complaining and grumbling, they began to praise the Lord in Acts chapter 16. And as they were praising the Lord, we read in verse 25 and 26 of Acts 16, The Lord opened the prison doors. Again a fulfillment of that promise.

My dear friend, the key to every fish's mouth is in God's hands. To every prison door, to every situation you're in, if you praise Him and stop complaining, He can open every door. There's no door that the Lord cannot open.

Miracles happen when you begin to praise God in faith.

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