

The Power of Praise

We are on our 8th day of 21 days of prayer and fasting. How's it going? Feeling it? Spending more time in prayer? I am seeing results.

Something about denying your flesh something it desires—it makes you more sensitive in prayer to the Spirit of God!

I want to talk about your praise life today!

Someone once said “Praise is the highest form of prayer...” I agree. Praise is a vital part of our prayer life. To really excel in prayer, you need to grow in your praise life.

What do I mean by that? —Praising God needs to become a part of your lifestyle.

Example,

Praise and Thanksgiving are the THERMOSTAT of your life. You set your thermostat in your house for how warm or cold you want it. Your praise and thanks to God is like that. The higher you set it, the stronger you'll be. The lower you set it—the weaker you'll be...

Praise is like a garment you put on—

Isaiah 61:3

3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” NKJV

- **garment**—You put it on—You put on praise.
- For the spirit of heaviness...
 - It's the antidote
 - It's the way out of it

(NIV says “instead of a spirit of despair”)

There is power in praise to pull you out of a state of heaviness and despair and get your mind and emotions on the higher ground of joy and strength

I. I do praise God when things are going well, but when they are not—it's sure hard to praise Him.

Instead of praise Him—we want to blame Him!

What does the word say?

Paul and Silas—Acts 16. Paul searching for the will of God on where to go. Trying to go one way—the Holy Spirit forbid them. Trying to go another way... The Holy Spirit wouldn't permit them... As they prayed Paul had a VISION.

Go to MACEDONIA

They go—start minister the Good News about Jesus. Meeting with some families. A young servant woman who was “possessed with a spirit of divination” met us Luke says. After a few days of this woman crying after them Paul cast out the spirit...

Acts 16:16

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

Lit., *a spirit, a Python*. Python, in the Greek mythology, was the serpent which guarded Delphi. According to the legend, as related in the Homeric hymn, Apollo descended from Olympus in order to select a site for his shrine and oracle. Having fixed upon a spot on the southern side of Mount Parnassus, he found it guarded by a vast and terrific serpent, which he slew with an arrow, and suffered its body to rot (πυθεῖν) in the sun. Hence

the name of the serpent *Python* (rotting); *Pytho*, the name of the place, and the epithet *Pythian*, applied to Apollo. The name *Python* was subsequently used to denote a prophetic *demon*, and was also used of *soothsayers* who practised *ventriloquism*, or speaking from the belly. The word **ἐγγαστρίμυθος**, *ventriloquist*, occurs in the Septuagint, and is rendered *having a familiar spirit* (see Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Samuel 28:7, 8). The heathen inhabitants of Philippi regarded the woman as inspired by Apollo; and Luke, in recording this ease, which came under his own observation, uses the term which would naturally suggest itself to a Greek physician, a *Python-spirit*, presenting phenomena identical with the convulsive movements and wild cries of the Pythian priestess at Delphi.

Acts 16:17-25

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;

21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."

22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods.

23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying **and singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

- Midnight in your life—it's dark. It's cold. You feel like your in a prison... it stinks... your situation.
- You begin to question if you're in the will of God.
- You begin to question if God is really with you...
- Has He deserted you. Is there any Hope?

Illustration,

Silas saying, “Paul, about that vision...are you sure you really heard from God, because I mean come on...Look at us! Look at this situation we’re in. God’s forgotten us.

When you are serving God, you are living right, you are being led by the HOLY Spirit in you life—you can still find yourself in situations where you are in trouble!

Have you ever tried to do something for God and the moment you stepped out in faith it seems like all hell was leashed out against you???

IT'S NOT FROM GOD—IT'S FROM SATAN

Jesus said—

John 16:33b

33 ...In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

—Why?

Because of Satan—he wants to stop you, he wants to stop God working in you and through you!

What do we do?

They prayed... reach out to God in prayer...

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying **and singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

But don't forget about Praise! THEY PRAYED **AND...**

Amplified Bible

25 ...were praying **and *singing hymns of praise*** to God...

II. Why praise? —Praise is how we get into the presence of God.

Psalms 100:4

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.

Thanksgiving = to-daw'

From [H3034](#); properly an *extension* of the hand, that is, (by implication) *avowal*, or (usually) *adoration*; specifically a *choir* of worshippers: - confession, (sacrifice of) praise, thanks (-giving, offering).

Praise = Tehillah

1) to praise, sing a hymn of praise and adoration, do it publicly

Be thankful = yâdâh (yaw-daw') (from Judah)

1) to throw, shoot (like arrows), cast
1c1) to give thanks,, laud, praise

1c2) to confess, confess (the name of God)

Bless = bârak

baw-rak'

A primitive root; to *kneel*; when expressed toward God it means: *ble*ss God (as an act of adoration), to praise

- Greek Humneo in Acts 16 to sing hymns of praise (hymn meaning song, any song)

Paul and Silas were in a spiritual battle

Prayer and praise transported into the throne room of God

- He inhabits the praises of His people

Their praises were a call to the angels of God to get involved in the situation.

It unleashes spiritual forces into your battle.

Ps 103 says that the angels hearken to His word

Example,

King Jehoshaphat in the OT. The armies of 3 nations came against Israel (kind of like today!) from areas around and including ancient Syria.

- Ammonites
- Moabites
- Mount Seir

Jehoshaphat and Israel were afraid. He prayed at the court of the temple when they were all assembled. One of the prophets Jahaziel the son of Zechariah prophesied to them—

2 Chronicles 20:15-23

15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel.

17 You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you."

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy *endures* forever."

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them*. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

- Praise confused the enemies

Example,

Like a lion attacking a pack of zebras... Zoologists say that when the zebras are together, their stripes confuse the predators... it all looks like one big mass of zebra too big for them to take on.

In the same way when you praise God—it brings in His presence and confuses the enemy—the satanic forces of demonic spirits arrayed against you!

It puts them in chaos!

Just like the enemies of Israel destroyed themselves—your praise will put the forces of satan to flight!

Jehoshaphat and Israel were 3 days in collecting the valuables left behind—God delivered them and blessed them!

They came out stronger and better than before!

What about in the NT?

III. What happened to Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises?

Lets read!

Acts 16:25-32

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

As they prayed and sang praises to God, they had the first Jailhouse Rock!

A localized earthquake began to rumble and shake the prison until all the chains were broken off the prisoners and the doors were opened. God was Glorified...

What are you going through?

What is the midnight in your life?

- A great key to your victory is the power released in praise