

Purpose of God's Blessing



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as I continue to share with you on the rich and exciting theme of praise.

In my introductory talk yesterday I pointed out that praise is eternal. It's the unceasing activity of all the glorious creatures who have the most direct access to God in heaven. Here on earth also, praise is the appointed way of access for us to God.

The Bible pictures God as dwelling in a city of such perfect peace and tranquillity that not even the sounds of violence can be heard there! But all the gates to this city are marked "praise." In other words, praise is the only way of access into the presence and the dwelling place of God. Praise is also the appropriate way that we relate to God as a King on His throne. Furthermore, when we do relate to God in this way, it confers royal dignity upon us also. One beautiful picture of this in the Bible is Queen Esther putting on her royal garments, going into the presence of King Ahasuerus, touching the tip of his extended golden scepter and being told that whatever she requested would be granted to her, even to an equal share in the kingdom.

This is just how God as the King of all kings, will respond to us when we go into His presence adorned in the beauty of holiness and wearing our royal and splendid garment of praise.

Today I'm going to show you that praise is the purpose for which God blesses us. His blessings are designed to call forth praise from us. Praise is our appropriate response to God's blessings. This places praise in the category of ends rather than means. Let me explain this briefly. A means is not valuable in itself but only insofar as it enables us to achieve something else through it and beyond it. On the other hand, an end is something that is valuable in itself, even if it leads to nothing further beyond itself.

So many of the things that we regularly do in the practice of religion are means, not ends. They are valuable only if they enable us to achieve something beyond them. In actual fact, it often happens in our religious activities that we get bogged down in a welter of means without even being aware of the ends that they are supposed to achieve, much less insuring

that they do actually achieve those ends.

However, praise does not belong to this category of means. Praise is an end in itself. It is supremely valuable for its own sake. Let's look now at some of the Scriptures that present praise as an end in itself. First of all, we'll turn to a prayer of the psalmist in Psalm 106:47:

> "Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen [or the nations], to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise." (KJV)

I believe that's a prayer that's appropriate to the present situation with God's people. I believe we're living in a time of restoration and regathering and reuniting, and God is saving His people and gathering His people back into their inheritance. But notice the purpose for which God is doing this, the response that God requires from us. He's doing it that we may give thanks unto His holy name and triumph in His praise.

That word "triumph" is one of the key words of the Scripture. We need to understand a little about it. First of all, we need to understand that a triumph is not the winning of a battle, it's the celebration of a battle or of a war that has already been won. And in this context we need to see ourselves not as fighting the battle, but as entering into the victory that Christ has already won for us. This victory and the triumph are described in the New Testament in Colossians 2:15. Speaking of what was accomplished through the death of Christ on the cross, Paul says this of God:

> "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

You see the word "triumph" there. The death of Jesus was a victory that led to a triumph, and we're invited to share that triumph.

By His death, Jesus conquered all the evil satanic forces, the powers and authorities, the whole satanic kingdom that had been set in array against us and was working for our destruction and ruin. The only one who could save us and help us was Jesus, and He came to our help through the cross. He defeated all those satanic powers, He made a public spectacle of them, and He triumphed over them by the cross.

The triumph was familiar in the Roman civilization of Paul's day. It was the highest honor that the Senate of Rome could vote a victorious Roman general. It went something like this:

After the Senate had voted a triumph to this general, on a specific day he was placed on a special chariot drawn by a white horse and the chariot drove him in triumph through the streets of Rome. The people of Rome lined the streets on either side and applauded as he went past in the chariot. Behind him there followed a whole train of people and creatures that indicated the nature of his victory: kings and rulers and generals that he had taken captive; many, many ranks of prisoners of war in manacles and chains; and even sometimes wild animals from the territories that the general's conquests had added to the Roman Empire. Sometimes it would be a tiger or some animal that the Roman people were not familiar with. All these were the evidences of his victory, the manifestation of his triumph.

So that's how Jesus dealt with Satan at the cross. He not only conquered him but He took all those evil powers and authorities captive, and then He laid them in visible defeat behind His chariot.

Now, where do we fit in this picture? Are we on the sidewalk applauding? No, that's not God's purpose. Let's look at what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:14. The King James Version goes like this:

> "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place."

The New International Version says this:

> "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him."

You see where we're supposed to be? Not being led in chains behind the chariot, not even standing on the sidewalk and applauding. But where are we to be? In the chariot sharing Christ's triumph. How do we get into the chariot? The answer is we triumph in His praise. It's when we praise Him that we're lifted up above the level of the sidewalk and we find ourselves right there in the chariot with Christ, sharing His glorious eternal victory over all the forces of evil. "Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphant procession in Christ." But He does it only when we learn to praise Him aright.

I have said that praise is an end, not a means. It's something that's desirable for its own sake, not just because it leads to something else.

Here's another Scripture that brings out this fact about praise. It's one of the psalms of David, Psalm 30:11-12. David says this:

> "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever." (KJV)

Notice, David has experienced the glorious deliverance of the Lord, just as you and I have done, through what Christ has done on our behalf. And David realized, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, the purpose for which the Lord had done this for him. The Lord had put off his sackcloth, girded him with gladness, the Lord had turned his mourning into dancing. What was the response that the Lord required from David? David says it very clearly, "To the end that…" That's the purpose. "To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent…" We have no right to be silent when we celebrate the victories that Christ has won on our behalf. The only appropriate response is praise.

You noticed that David says, "My glory may sing praise to thee…" What does he mean by "My glory"? The answer is, he means his tongue. Let me show you how Scripture comments on this. In Psalm 16:9, another psalm of David, David says:

> "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." (KJV)

Now Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, quoted this verse in Acts 2:26, but this is how he quoted it:

> "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope…" (KJV)

You notice that where the psalmist in the Old Testament says "my glory," Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, offers us the divine commentary on this. He says, "my tongue." What does that tell us? It tells us that our tongue is our glory. You say, "Well, why is my tongue my glory?" I'll tell you, because your tongue and my tongue was placed in our mouths for one supreme purpose. You know what that was? To give glory to God! How do we give glory to God? Well, that's what David said, "to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent." Bear that in mind, the supreme purpose of the human tongue is to give glory to God. To praise Him. To worship Him. To acknowledge Him. In fact, every use of our tongues that does not glorify God is a misuse! Remember that, will you? Your tongue is your glory. It becomes your glory in effect, in reality, when you use it to praise God.

Our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme of praise. I'll be speaking about praise as a way of deliverance.

Radio Program

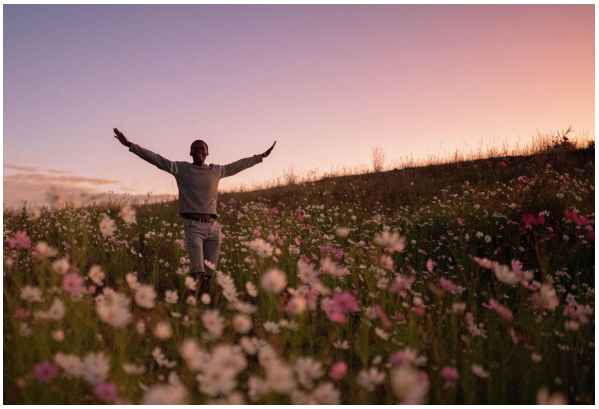
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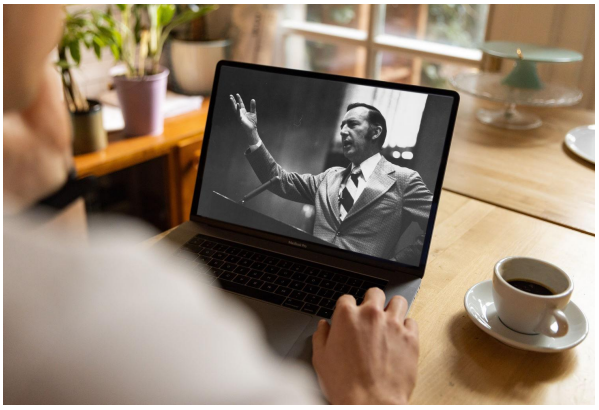
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