

A Way of Deliverance



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we follow through our theme for this week, the theme of praise.

In my previous talks this week I've been dealing with various aspects of praise. First of all, praise is eternal. It's the unceasing activity of all the glorious creatures who have the most direct access to God in the heaven. Second, for us on earth, praise is our only way of access into the presence and dwelling place of God. Third, praise is the appropriate way that we relate to God as a King on His throne. It is a royal garment that makes us fit for His presence. Fourth, praise is the purpose for which God blesses us. His blessings are designed to call forth praise from us. Thus praise is an end in itself, not just a means to some other end.

Today I'm going to deal with another vitally important aspect of praise, praise as a way of deliverance. By this I mean that when we find ourselves in some critical or desperate situation, praise opens the way for God to intervene on our behalf and work out our deliverance, often on a level far higher than anything we could ever achieve merely by our own efforts.

This general principle is stated in Psalm 50:23. I'm going to read two different versions of this verse, which bring out different aspects of the truth. First of all, the King James:

> "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

Now the New International Version of the same verse:

> "He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God."

I think that's very significant, that alternative translation. From my understanding of the Hebrew language, I would say each is a legitimate translation. But you see that the one who offers praise prepares the way that God may show him His salvation. In other words, praise opens the way for God to intervene supernaturally on our behalf. God's salvation there means His deliverance, His help when we're in desperate

need and trouble, we don't have the answer to our own problems. Then, if we praise God in faith, our praise opens the way for God to intervene.

There's a very good example of this in the Old Testament in 2 Chronicles 20, a record of the reign of King Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. At a certain point in his reign, King Jehoshaphat was informed that a very large alien invading army was on its way against him from the southeast; an army of Ammonites and Moabites and people from Mt. Seir, all of them coming with the intention of invading and destroying the kingdom of Judah. King Jehoshaphat realized that he didn't have the military means in the natural to withstand this invading army. And so, he turned to God, he turned to a supernatural realm. He did various things: he proclaimed a fast, he called God's people together for prayer, then he led the people in prayer and, after he had prayed, a supernatural utterance was given through one of the Levites, an utterance in prophecy in which God revealed that He'd heard the prayer and that He was going to intervene on behalf of His people Judah, and that they wouldn't need to fight. So when the people heard this beautiful prophecy it says, "they bowed their heads and worshiped…"

Now let's see what Jehoshaphat did next. I'm going to read verses 21 through 26:

> "After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.' As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."

Notice that very significant phrase, "as the men of Judah began to sing and praise, the Lord intervened against the enemies." This is what happened:

> "The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from [Mount] Seir, they helped to destroy one another. When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and also articles of value, more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it. On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah [Beracah is the Hebrew word for 'blessing'], where they praised the LORD. This is why it is called the Valley of Beracah [or 'blessing'] to this day."

See how God intervened! Jehoshaphat and his people didn't have the military means, they didn't have the natural power. But when they received the message of encouragement through prophecy and then set aside men simply to sing and to praise the Lord, when the Lord heard their praises He Himself intervened against their enemies, put division and enmity amongst the enemies so that they actually destroyed themselves. And true to the prophecy, the men of Judah didn't even have to fight. When they arrived where the battle was to have taken place, their enemies were already dead bodies lying on the ground. All they had to do was to gather the spoil; and there was so much spoil that it took three days to gather it. That's a beautiful picture of how, when we do not have the answer to a situation, when we're confronted by crisis, something too big for us to handle, one of the wisest things we can do is simply to turn away from the crises and the situation to the Lord, and in faith begin to praise Him, because when we praise the Lord it opens the way for His miraculous intervention on our behalf. If we honor the Lord in our praise, the Lord takes care of our problem.

I've been saying that praise offered in faith when we're faced with a critical situation opens the way for God to intervene supernaturally on our behalf. I gave you an example from the Old Testament from the story of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. Now I want to give you another example from the New Testament, the story of Paul and Silas in the city of Philippi. You probably remember that Paul and Silas had arrived there for the first time to preach the gospel in the city of Europe and things had been going quite well. And then Paul got involved with this girl with a spirit of fortune telling, he cast the evil spirit of fortune telling out of the girl, and the whole city just broke into an uproar, and for no real, adequate reason. Paul and Silas were treated as criminals. The magistrates had them severely flogged and then put them in prison. Now, here's how the story goes on from there, Acts 16:23-30:

> "After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were

> listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped."

You need to understand that the jailer always had to answer with his own life for the safety of his prisoners. If the prisoners escaped, he was put to death, so he'd rather put himself to death than wait to be executed by the Roman authorities. However, Paul had pity on that jailer.

> "But Paul shouted, 'Don't harm yourself! We are all here!' The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Men, what must I do to be saved?'"

Isn't that a beautiful picture of God's supernatural intervention on behalf of servants of His who'd learned the secret of praise? There Paul and Silas were, their backs bleeding, the maximum security jail, their feet in the stocks, apparently a hopeless situation. But they had the faith and the courage just to praise God. Nothing in their natural situation had changed but it says, "They praised and sang hymns to God." It says, "the other prisoners were listening to them." That always appeals to me, that statement! I'm sure that those prisoners had never heard anything like that before in that prison, and they just didn't know what kind of persons they had there in that maximum security jail. In fact, I believe it would be surprising enough in any prison today if the prisoners in the maximum security jail were heard singing hymns and praising God! You might say, "Well, what a foolish thing to do," but the Bible says the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Out of that foolishness came a might intervention of God. There was an earthquake. God sent the earthquake. All the doors were opened, all the prisoners' bonds were loosed, and the jailer came to the point of conviction where he wanted to know how he too could have this kind of experience!

That's a beautiful picture but remember one thing, praise is a sacrifice. Hebrews 13:15:

> "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess his name."

In other words, praise is an act of obedience arising from the will, not from feelings or circumstances. I'm sure that Paul and Silas didn't feel like praising the Lord but they offered the sacrifice of praise.

Well, 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 specifically about praise as a weapon of spiritual warfare.

Radio Program

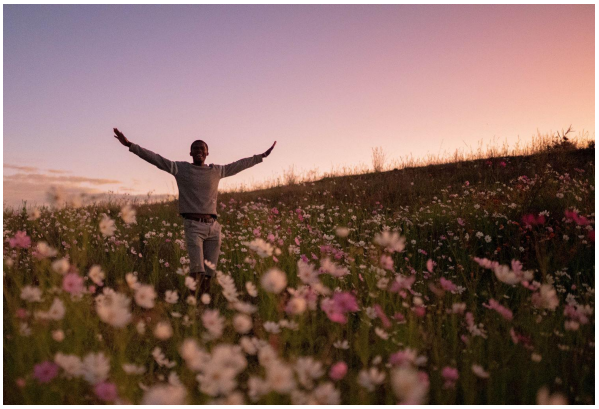
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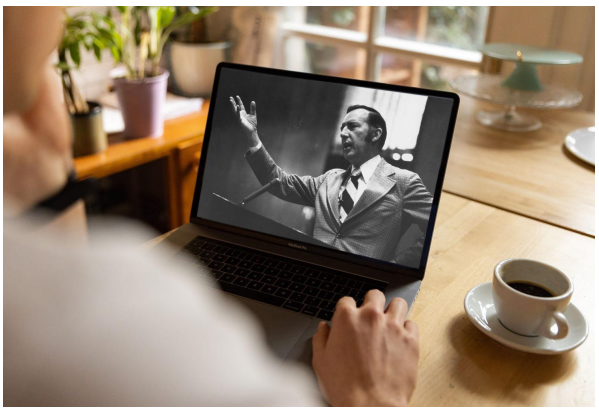
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