

A Weapon of Spiritual Warfare



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 9)
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 talk yesterday I spoke about praise as a way of deliverance. I explained 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.

One example I gave of this was Paul and Silas in the jail in Philippi, their backs bleeding, their feet fastened in the stocks. As they sang praises to God at midnight, the darkest hour, God intervened on their behalf, dramatically and supernaturally, with an earthquake that rocked the prison, opened all the doors, set all the prisoners free and brought the jailer to the place where he cried out for salvation! It was the praises of Paul and Silas that prepared the way for this supernatural intervention of God on their behalf. This incident also brings out the fact that praise is a sacrifice, 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 God but they offered God their praise as a sacrifice.

Today I'm going to take this concept of praise one step further. I'm going to speak about praise as a weapon of spiritual warfare. I used the phrase "one step further" to bring out an important difference. When we use the word "deliverance," our posture is essentially defensive. We need help to get us out of something. But when we use the word "weapon," our posture is more aggressive. We are thinking in terms of attacking an enemy. The objective that we have in mind is not merely deliverance, it is victory. It is from this positive, aggressive point of view that I'm going to approach the theme of praise in my talk today.

Of course, the use of the word "weapon" in connection with praise presupposes a war. It presupposes that us Christians, we are involved in a war and this is indeed the truth. It's made plain in many different passages of Scripture. We don't really have a choice about this as Christians. If we are Christians, we are involved in a war. So we better know what the war is about and the weapons that God has provided for us. Paul describes this in Ephesians 6:10-12, where he's writing to

Christians, and he says:

> "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

Notice the word "armor" again reinforces the picture of war. Then in the next verse, verse 12, Paul tells us the kind of forces that are pitted against us in this war:

> "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood..."

One of the other translations says "persons with bodies." We're not fighting persons with bodies; it's not a natural warfare against flesh and blood. Whom are we fighting then? Paul goes on:

> "...against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

We don't have time in this talk today to analyze in detail the nature of Satan's kingdom and its structure. But we notice that a highly organized kingdom of evil spiritual beings with their headquarters in the heavenlies is arrayed against us, and we have to acknowledge this situation and take the appropriate action. One of the provisions that God has made for us in this warfare is the weapon of praise. What does praise do for us in this war? Let's look at a passage in Psalm 8:2; the psalmist David says this:

> "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger."

We see here that it's speaking of God's enemies and provisions that God has made for us to deal with these enemies; and in particular, the psalmist speaks of one specific enemy, "the enemy," "the avenger." That, I believe, is Satan. So here is a provision of God: strength that God has provided for us to deal with our enemy Satan, and with that whole evil spiritual kingdom that's opposed to us.

But what is the strength? This is one of those places where Scripture comments on itself, for in the New Testament in Matthew 21:15-16, Jesus Himself quotes this verse from Psalm 8:2, but He just changes one or two words. The scene is Jesus in the temple, teaching, performing miracles, the children running to and fro, excited, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the religious leaders protesting and asking Jesus to silence the children. Here's what Jesus says:

> "But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they became indignant, and said to Him, 'Do You hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast [perfected] praise for Thyself'?'" (NAS)

You see, Jesus was quoting Psalm 8:2, but where the psalmist said, "Thou hast ordained strength," Jesus said, "Thou hast perfected [or prepared] praise." What does that tell us? Something vitally important, that the strength which God has ordained for His people is perfect praise. And when perfect praise comes out of our lips, we silence our adversary the devil. There are some points to notice there that are very significant.

First of all, the religious leaders were upset by this praise. I'm afraid that's sometimes true today. Some people in churches don't understand the importance of loudly and vocally and continuously praising God, it upsets them.

Then Jesus spoke about "babes." Babes, I understand to mean those who depend least on natural strength or reason. At one point Jesus spoke of His own disciples as babes. He said to the Father, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes..." So babes are those who depend least on natural strength or reason.

And notice that this is all related to God's adversaries and that the result of this perfect praise is to silence the enemy and the avenger. So we see that praise is a weapon that we can use against Satan and his kingdom, a weapon to silence Satan.

You might ask, "Why do we need to silence Satan?" Let me give you a simple answer which is taken directly from Revelation 12:10. In this verse Satan is described as "the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night." It's angels who are speaking, and when angels speak of our brothers, they mean us who are believers on earth. So we learn from that verse that Satan is continually accusing us who are believers in Jesus in the heavens. Day and night he's accusing us before God.

Why does Satan accuse us? What is his objective? It is very obvious, Satan wants to prove us guilty. Remember that guilt is Satan's main weapon against us. As long as he can keep us

feeling guilty, we are no match for him.

"Well," you might say, "why doesn't God silence Satan?" I'll tell you one very good, practical reason: God isn't going to silence Satan because He's given us the means to silence Satan, and God is waiting for us to use those means. What are they? Perfect praise. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God has ordained strength [or perfected praise] that He might silence the enemy and the avenger." Isn't that good news, that when we learn to praise God aright we can silence Satan!

I'm reminded of something that happened in my ministry a good many years ago. I was pastoring a congregation in London, England. Two Russian Jewish women who were believers had come to visit my wife and me in our home, and we were praising the Lord together in our living room. And these two Russian Jewish believers really believed in praising the Lord out loud. In the middle of this, a lady who was a member of my congregation arrived unexpectedly, bringing her husband with her. She said, "This is my husband. He's just come out of jail and he has an evil spirit. He needs deliverance." I'll tell you, that embarrassed me. I really didn't know what to do about it but I couldn't refuse, so I said, "Well, let's just keep praying." So we continued praying and praising the Lord out loud and after a while, this man who'd just come out of prison came up to me rather sheepishly and he said, "I'm going. There's too much noise here!" Now, I hadn't prepared any answer but I'm sure that the answer that I gave him was the right one. I said, "Listen, the one who doesn't like the noise is the devil because we are praising Jesus and the devil hates that! You've got two options. If you go now the devil will go with you, but if you stay the devil will go without you!" He said, "I'll stay!"

We went on praising the Lord and about ten minutes later he came up to me again. He said, "The devil just left. I felt him leave my throat!"

Well, I've always remembered that. I really didn't understand how to handle evil spirits at that time, but in my foolishness and ignorance and weakness, God came to my help, and that man's help too. And I took away from that a lesson. The lesson is this: when we praise the Lord out loud and continue to do it, we embarrass and trouble the devil much more than he can ever embarrass or trouble us. So remember that in many situations, when you're confronted with the challenge to praise the Lord, you've got two options: if you leave and give up, you'll leave with the devil, but if you stay and steadfastly praise the Lord, the devil will leave without you. Praise is a weapon given us by God to silence Satan and his accusations against us.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be bringing you my concluding talk on praise. I'll be answering certain specific questions: when should we praise God, how should we praise God, who should praise God.

Radio Program

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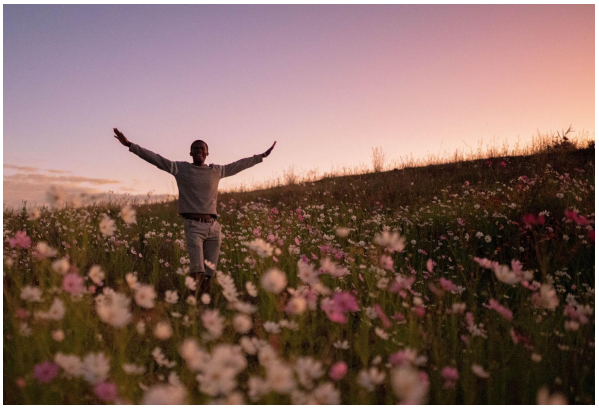

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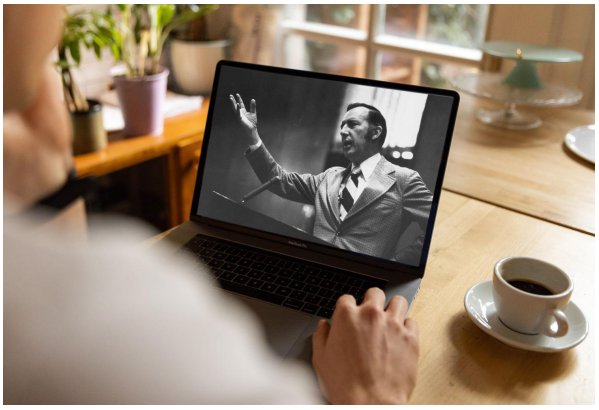

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