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“All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD: and thy saints shall bless thee” (Psalm 145:10).

Praise in Worship

Central Truth: Praise of God is an expression of worship.

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All people have some form of worship. It may be motivated by dread of punishment; it may be an effort to present a bribe for a desired benefit; or it may be motivated by love which is expressed in praise. But people will worship. Blessed is the person whose worship is directed to the God revealed in the Bible, is in the spirit and in truth, and is marked by praise.

The Bible says praise of God is beautiful for those who are upright in heart (Psalm 33:1). Consider the benefits we receive in the praise of God. (1) Praise fulfills our nature; we are made with the capacity and need to praise God. (2) Praise delivers us from self-centeredness and fear as we look away from self to Him to Whom our praise is directed. (3) Praise magnifies God by giving Him “the glory due unto his name” (Psalm 29:2). (4) Praise promotes our spiritual growth as we count our blessings and note what God has done. (5) Praise enables us to meet with God because He inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). (6) Praise for God increases our reverence, service, and loyalty to Him (Deuteronomy 10:20, 21).

I. PRAISE GOD PERSONALLY

Read Psalm 145:1, 2 again. Notice the personal pronouns. David speaks of “*I*” and “*my*”; he refers to God as “*thee*” (You) and “*thy*” (Your). This answers the question, “Who worships God through praise?” David answers, “I do.” Whom do we worship through our praise? David answers, “Thee (God).”

Beware of a spectator spirit. It is easy to listen to others sing, pray, and preach. It is easy to expect others to respond. But that is not worship if that is all you do. If you are a spectator in worship, it will be as unfulfilling as watching a person while he eats. It will leave you empty.

All creation joins in the praise of God. *“Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee”* (Psalm 67:3, 5). That includes you. Each generation learns of the glories of the Lord through the praises of the former generation (Psalm 145:4). Psalm 148 describes His praises from the heavens, angels, sun and moon, stars of light, waters, sea creatures, fruitful trees and cedars, beasts and cattle, creeping things, and flying fowl. If the inanimate objects of nature and the beasts which are lower than mankind join in praise to God, surely we should praise Him. Let the kings and citizens, princes and judges, young men and maidens, old men and children praise the name of the Lord. You are included in that list. How do you engage personally in the praise of God?

II. PRAISE GOD CONTINUALLY

The psalmist resolved, *“Every day I will bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever”* (Psalm 145:2). That is continual praise (*“every day”*) and unending praise (*“for ever and ever”*) Think about the implications of that resolve.

It means to praise God when all is well. Psalm 68:19 praises God *“who daily loadeth us with benefits.”* If our praise continues as long as His provisions, when will we stop praising Him? Never! Look at the list of good things God gives us: forgiveness, healing, redemption, loving-kindness and tender mercies, satisfaction, and strength (Psalm 103:3-5). In response to His provision we say, *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits”* (Psalm 103:2).

To praise God continually means to praise Him in times of trouble. Have you ever praised God when you were hurting? Have you ever praised Him when you felt there was hardly a reason for praise? Have you learned to give thanks *“in everything”* (I Thessalonians 5:18) and to give *“thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Ephesians 5:20)? That may be the time when you offer to Him *“the sacrifice of praise”* (Hebrews 13:15).

Praising God in times of blessings increases the blessing. Praising God in times of trouble lightens the load. Praise is always in order. Just as you have a “habit” of prayer, develop the spirit of praise.

Here is an answer to the questions, “When?” Praise God all the time. A

man who was continually praising God suffered a severe cut on his hand. People wondered what he would find to praise God about in that. He said, “You heard that I cut my hand, but praise the Lord I did not cut it off.” That is the spirit! Cultivate it.

III. PRAISE GOD REVERENTLY

Here is the answer to the question “Why?” in the worship of God. Psalm 145:4-13 speaks of the “*mighty acts,*” “*glorious honour,*” “*wondrous works,*” “*great goodness,*” “*righteousness,*” and “*the glorious majesty*” of God. It praises Him for His goodness, righteousness, compassion, mercy, power, and involvement with His people. Such a God deserves heartfelt and reverent worship. The proper response of the human heart is, “*I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised*” (Psalm 18:3).

A. We worship Him for His deeds (verses 6, 10-12). His acts are inspiring. “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. . . . Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*” (Psalm 19:1-4). And beyond that, consider His great work of redemption. We praise Him for what He has done and is doing now.

B. We worship Him for His loving-kindness (verses 7-9). “*His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD*” (Psalm 117:2). What a beautiful word, loving-kindness. It denotes affectionate kindness produced by deep-felt personal love. We must call it kindness, mercy, pity, favor, and goodness to gather the scope of its meaning. God's loving-kindness toward us arouses the response of worship in our hearts.

C. We worship Him for His sovereignty (verses 12, 13). To say God is sovereign means He is above and superior to all others in rank, position, power, and authority. He is supreme and independent. He depends on no other and is ruler over all else. “*The LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else*” (Deuteronomy 4:39).

God's sovereignty is seen in His mighty acts, the glorious majesty of His kingdom, and the eternity of His dominion (Psalm 145:12, 13). No wonder the psalmist issued the call, “*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker*” (Psalm 95:6). The sovereign God

deserves the worship of His creation.

IV. PRAISE GOD FULLY

Psalm 145 calls us to praise God personally (verses 1, 2), continually (verses 1, 2), and reverently (verses 4-13). But how is such worship expressed in our churches? We praise God by full participation in worship.

A. Praise God by singing to Him. Think of the words of the song. Speak them to God as you sing, "My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine." Speak of God that others may hear your testimony as you sing, "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one." Every song can be a prayer, a praise, or a testimony. Sing with the proper meaning and meditate on God during periods of instrumental music (Psalm 150).

B. Praise God by your prayers of thanks and praise. A good spiritual discipline is having a prayer time in which you give thanks and praise to God, asking Him for nothing. The horseleach cries, "give, give," but the prayers of God's children should include more than that (Proverbs 30:15).

C. Praise God by hearing with a humble and receptive spirit. Young Samuel set the example for us with his words, "*Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth*" (I Samuel 3:9). God has a message for each of His dear children each time they worship if they are willing to receive it. Let Him speak through the pastor's words or beyond his words, but hear what God has to say.

D. Praise God by meditation on divine things. As you drive to church, think about the things of God. At quiet moments in the service during the offering, for instance—think of the Lord. This week's Daily Bible Readings speak of God's greatness, majesty, mighty works, holiness, and provisions. Let those thoughts fill your mind. As you meditate, worship.

E. Praise God by testimonies of His work. Psalm 78 is a beautiful testimony of God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage to their settlement in their Promised Land. As you have opportunity, speak of what God has done for you. What is God doing in your life? Tell others of it. Your testimony will be an act of worship and praise.

F. Praise God by your posture in worship. The Bible speaks of standing, bowing, kneeling, and lying prostrate before the Lord. It speaks of clapping the hands, lifting the hands, and dancing before the Lord as expressions of praise and worship. Sit erect and show interest as you worship God.

G. Praise God by words spoken in worship. Learn to say "Amen,"

“Praise the Lord,” “Hallelujah” (or my preference, “Glory”). Worship should be an expression of what is happening in your heart. Do not be embarrassed to express praise.

H. Praise God by emotions. Tears of joy or repentance are always appropriate before the Lord. Recently I had suffered through an unusually trying week. I stood in the pulpit Sunday morning and felt emptiness in my spirit. I asked, “Lord, how can there be life in this sermon when I feel so empty?” Then our worship leader began the song, “Come, Holy Spirit,” written by Gloria and William J. Gaither. As we sang, “Come as a rest to the weary, Come as a balm for the sore; Come as a dew to my dryness: Fill me with joy evermore,” I began to weep before my congregation. God ministered to me, and I was able to preach with a depth of spirit which was not possible before. Never be ashamed of your tears before the Lord.

I. Praise God by encouraging one another in worship. Hebrews 10:25 says that encouragement is a part of worship. Many who come to worship in defeat leave with victory because of the ministry of fellow Christians. Be a blessing and you will receive a blessing.

Praise God in your daily outlook on life. Choose to live in a spirit of praise, and praise will become natural in your worship of God. Cultivate praise and make it sincere. Ascribe praise to Him who is so worthy of your worship.

Questions

1. Why do we need to include praise in our worship?
2. How can you develop a personal spirit of praise in worship?
3. What is the danger in a “spectator spirit” in worship?
4. How can praise be full and yet be reverent in worship?
5. For what specific things can you praise God today?
6. How can you participate more fully in worship services?
7. How can you make your singing more an expression of praise?
8. How can you hear the sermon in a spirit of praise?
9. What part do emotions play in your worship of God?
10. How can you put some principles of this study into operation?