

Praise

Objectives

Praising God is the work of Angels and the victorious church and this is what we have to do to share them in praising our good Lord

References

- ❖ Praise (Tasbeha), The Vespers, and The Matins by Fr. Tadros Malaty

Scriptural Verse

“Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the Lord with the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skilfully with a shout of joy. For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth” (Psalm 33: 1-4)

Lesson Outline

The Bible teaches us that as Christians we must live a life of praise.

- ❖ Hebrews 13:15 "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name".
- ❖ Psalm 34:1, "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips".

Why do we pray and supplicate more than we praise?

- ❖ We don't know how to praise.
- ❖ We don't truly feel and believe that God is worthy of praise. But our life circumstances, our failures and shortcomings make us doubt God's goodness and therefore there is no desire in hearts to break out in praise. There may be a desire to ask God why are you allowing this to happen to me, or please take this away but there is usually no desire to say you are awesome regardless of what is happening to me.

However, some of the most praising people in the Bible were the ones that had the most hardships happening to them.

- ❖ The prophet, Habakkuk, spoke of a very dismal time in the history of Israel. He said there was coming a time when "... the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls..." These would be very trying times indeed. Nevertheless, even in the midst of all this he said, "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).
- ❖ David's life was filled with this continual praise to God. He had his downfalls and his uprisings, but his life was fundamentally characterized by praise. When he wrote Psalm seventy-one, he was an old man. He had been in many dangers and difficulties while serving God. He had been rescued from his own sins on more than one occasion, by His

gracious God. When he thought of all the watchful care that God had blessed him with all the days of his life, he said in Psalm 71:6 “By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother’s womb. My praise shall be continually of You.” As he thought over all this, he determined to praise God even more than he had in the past. “...I will hope **continually**, and will praise you yet more and more” (verse 14).

Fannie Crosby was a hymn writer who lived in the mid to late 19th century. She became permanently blind at six weeks of age and lost her father when she was a year old. Yet she wrote 9,000 hymns of praise and worship and became one of the most famous American hymn writers. Why would a woman who has undergone so much hardship have such a heart of praise?

These people truly believed in God’s goodness and that all things that happened to them were a part of God’s plan for their lives to make them more like Christ and to bring them to a better place when they leave this world. They saw their hardships as a sign of God’s love.

How do we praise?

The Greek word for praise is doxology. Doxa means praise or glory and lego means to speak. So basically it is to speak out praises to God. Praise mainly consists of giving thanks. There are four main elements that we should praise or thank God for and this is best seen in the first 5 verses of Psalm 103:

Praise God **because He is Holy**, that means that regardless of that He does or does not do, He is by nature, excellent and perfect.

- ❖ Praise God **because He has done and will do good things** for you.
- ❖ Praise God **because He forgives your sins and allows you to be reconciled to Him** who is all pure and good.
- ❖ Praise God **because He heals you of your illnesses**, there are times when a simple cold can turn deadly.
- ❖ Praise God **for His protection from destruction** (e.g. while driving)
- ❖ Praise God **because by nature He is loving and merciful** more than we could ever imagine.
- ❖ Praise **God because He sustains us**, the good things that He does for us sustains our souls in our journey here on earth, it removes from us the weariness of life, its bitterness and helps us through hardships.

Of course praise can also include reciting parts of the church’s midnight praises but if we can’t do that then at least praising God by giving thanks for the above mentioned things is a start. Once we start praising God, we will actually become more aware of His goodness which will increase our faith and which will also result in giving Him more praise.

Conclusion

So in order to be able to praise God we must truly believe in His goodness and trust in His love. But what if we don’t feel joyful enough to praise? Then we should praise anyway because the feeling will change as we start saying joyful and thankful words and our minds will begin to absorb that and our emotions will change.

This is why St. Paul calls it a sacrifice. A sacrifice is something that we do that involves going against our nature and therefore it is something hard. To force yourself to praise God for His goodness when you don't feel it or when you are tired, is offering a sacrifice. Therefore just like prayer and reading the Bible praise is an acquired discipline.

Activities / Discussion Points

Have an overview of the midnight praise and see how the church put praising God in such a beautiful and deep order to teach us the importance of praise and the blessing we got while praising.