

Worthy of Praise

Hook

Praise can be defined as “the celebration, honoring, and adoration of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, whether by individual believers or by a community of believers¹.” In the bible there are countless examples of people celebrating the goodness of God, honoring the love of God, and adoring the grandeur of God. The reason being is that praise seems to be the natural response of the human heart when it encounters the Living God, and just as people are different so too does praise come in many different shades, hues, colors and flavors. For example:

Able offered up and acceptable sacrifice to the Lord.

- Able honored God as his supplier and sustainer through the quality of his sacrifice. You can almost hear him saying “Lord I can dare to give you my best because what you give me is always better.” (Heb. 11:4)

Noah’s altar and sacrifice after the flood

- After spending close to a year in the ark. Noah’s first act upon getting out the ark was erecting an altar and offering up a sacrifice to the Lord. In other words, Noah’s first act after facing the catastrophic flood sent by God was an act of gratitude celebrating his divine deliverance.

The Naming of Josephs Children.

- Josephs story of betrayal, slander, misfortune, and triumph is one that we are familiar with. However, if glossed over too quickly, we can miss this moment of praise in his life: After Josephs gets established in Egypt, he fathers two children, and names them
 - Manasseh -> *God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house.*
 - A living testament to his personal deliverance
 - Ephraim -> *For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.*
 - A living testament to how good God had been to him.

Praise is not restricted to singing only, since praise is the response of the human heart when it encounters the living God, that response can take many forms. However, singing seems to be a

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/8664-praise>

most common and relatable response. A good song of praise, one that is rich in lyrical content(gospel truth) and has a memorable melody, tends to stick with us for a very long time.

Take for instance the case **Exodus 15**, the song of Moses.

- “I will sing to the LORD for he has triumphed gloriously”(v.1)
- The LORD is my strength, and my song and he has become my salvation”(v.2)
- “In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries” (v.7)
- “You blew your wind; the sea covered them” (v.10)
- “You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them”(v.12)
- ***You have led in your steadfast love the people you have redeemed, you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.”(v.13)***

This song, sung after the Israelites were guided through the Red Sea, is a great example of the heart of praise in its response to work of God.

Main Lesson: God is Worthy of praise because of his guidance. (**Ex. 13:17-22**)

Continuing on with the Exodus narrative the first thing we notice from the passage(**Ex. 13:17-22**) is in verse 17. Which was that there was another way, shorter way, for the Israelites to get to where they were going. What we soon learn is that the shortest way isn't always the best way. God saw what awaited the Israelites on the shorter, easier path. It was filled with conflict, war, and defeating discouragements. God explains to Moses “the people will change their minds and return to Egypt if they faced war” (v.17). The Israelites would run back to pharaoh at the first sign of trouble, and even though they left in battle formation (v.18) they weren't quite ready to fight. In light of this insight into the hearts of his people God choose to lead them through the wilderness, the long way around. God's route for them wasn't an easy one, but it was necessary. What the Lord was doing was more than simply bringing the Israelites from point A to point B. He was establishing a nation, a people, **His** people who were to be a reflection to the world of who He was.

We as believers are called, by Christ, to walk in a similar fashion, forgoing the shorter/easier route (**1 John 2:16**) in favor of God's chosen course for our lives:

**“¹³Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.
¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**
(**Matthew 7:13-14**)

The Israelites would later doubt God, just as we are tempted to do as we journey in this life. In many of life's circumstances, we don't know what is going on, but we trust in the wisdom of God, knowing that God is good and that he is working out his sovereign purposes. (Gen 50:20; Romans 8:28). It's hard to make sense of some things in our minds because we aren't God. Our minds cannot grasp the big picture. God knows what he is doing. We may not know the way we are going but we know our God. Our guidance-giving, promise keeping God led Israel by day and by night in a most extra-ordinary way, so then:

“We must trust that the God who
cares for us more than we care for
ourselves will lead us in his paths for
his names sake (Ps. 23:3) just as he
promised (Jer. 29.11)”

-J.D. Greear

Some things to reflect on till next time:

→Read Exodus 14

Finally [...] whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)