

# Praise the Lord O My Soul



By Pastor Bill Shults



# **Praise the Lord**

## **O My Soul**

Why We Need to Praise God

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:1-10).

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“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on  
whom his favor rests’”

(Luke 2:13-14).

# Foreword

Angels lived on the earth before God created mankind. How did angels praise God? Did they sing? The heavenly host sang when Jesus was born. Did they say poetry? Was music involved? At big events we do all of these things to celebrate. At large sporting events we cheer and shout. At those events we sometimes chant slogans. Should church services in the USA include more of these things than we already do? Should there be a time and place to “cheer” for Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ has blessed those of us who live in the USA with the greatest abundance of all time. We have the greatest economy, which is the strongest producer of wealth ever known. Many times we never even acknowledge our blessing. We tend to take it for granted. When we eat, we bless God for the food, when we should bless God that we have food. It is time for us to think about Jesus Christ as our great benefactor. It is time for us to learn how to love Jesus Christ with our gratitude.

It is easy to criticize. It is too easy to pick things apart. It takes real effort to look into and find the good in our lives. It takes real effort to be happy. It takes thought to be grateful. It takes a different way of thinking to “see” good, when so much “bad” is going on all around you. We often overlook the good in our lives, when actually a lot in our lives is very good. The Lord has pretty much stayed the devil’s hand in our lives. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ. Learning how to praise is learning how to fix our eyes on Jesus Christ.

“For the LORD is good and  
his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues  
through all generations”  
(Psalm 100:5).



# The Lord is Good

For those of us who live in the USA, we are the most blessed people on earth. People should hear our praise to God on other continents. As Americans, we don't praise God well for the many things He has done for us. We are possessed of the best land on earth. We live on a well-protected continent. We have water in abundance over most of our country. We have freedoms enshrined in our Constitution that are the envy of the world. Where is our praise for the Almighty?

For those of us who live in 2023, we inhabit cities which we didn't build. We drive on roads which we didn't pave. We use public utilities which we neither created nor built. We all benefit from the sum of learning from the best Universities. We are possessed of the greatest businesses on earth which produce the finest products, develop the most stunning technology and deliver the world's best services. None of us had to build our homes, cut a farm out of the wilderness, or create a company from only an idea. We started out our lives as young adults and used, or failed to use, the greatest country and system on the earth. What a great blessing from God. Could one reason for our ingratitude be our lack of participation in our own system? We need to praise God for this great land, our tremendous system of wealth creation and the stupendous infrastructure available for our use.

We are the descendents of Joseph, son of Israel. We were promised the prosperity that we possess today. "Because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers" (Gen 49:25-26). These were the promises to Joseph from his father Israel. Moses extended this blessing to Joseph. "About Joseph he said: 'May the LORD bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below; with the best the sun brings forth

and the finest the moon can yield; with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills; with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim; such are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deuteronomy 33:13-17). In addition to all of this, as descendents of Abraham; we also inherit this promise to Abram: “I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you” (Genesis 17:6-7). We live at the intersection of several certain and important promises of God to His people. We are the physical descendents of those people. In addition, we are also a somewhat Christian nation that has embraced the Holy Bible with many who endeavor to live by God’s Word. We are truly blessed. We need to bless God.

We live in a good land filled with abundance that we inherited from our ancestors. We find ourselves living in a country built from the hard work of many generations. “When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you--a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant--then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Deuteronomy 6:10-12). Our task was to take what we found here and make it better. Our task was to take this great wealth and increase it. We were to increase the amount of wealth within our country and also increase the numbers of people who participate in it. As we enjoy the promises made to our fathers, we are supposed to bless God for His blessing and for our Founding Fathers. As we enjoy, increase and deepen those promises from God, we are supposed to praise Him for them. “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your

God for the good land he has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:10). This Hebrew word translated “praise” is “barach” from which comes “baruch.” This Hebrew word is often times translated “bless.” It is an important concept to “bless” God for the many good things which He has given to us. Look at what God has done for those of us living in the USA. “Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land--a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills” (Deuteronomy 8:6-9). We have the benefit of all of the things on this list. Until very recently, our great land was an exporter of many of these blessings.

The True and Living God gave us another stupendous blessing for which we owe Him a tremendous debt of praise: the US Constitution. Read it sometime; it is a work of art. It is a gift from God. We didn’t have to write it. We didn’t have to fight the world’s superpower to make it reality. We didn’t have to live under tyranny to understand its magnificent worth. We only have to use its great gifts to us and keep it secure. Our great US Constitution is the envy of the entire world. It contains supreme legal protections to worship God as you see fit. It contains supreme legal protections to preach the Truth about the True and Living God. It contains supreme legal protections to peaceably assemble for church. We take these rights for granted, because we’ve had them for so long. We need to praise God for our US Constitution. Our rights can be lost, especially when we are not grateful for them.

The US Constitution also contains provisions to ensure patent and copyright protection for intellectual property. This enables US citizens to keep the value of their hard work and ingenuity. How can wealth be created in any country when it can be easily stolen? Our Constitution protects the value of our money, secures our land from confiscation, and ensures our liberty. Our Constitutional system allows each and every one of us to learn and grow as individuals. Our government is vested in the People which allows anyone to achieve whatever our hard work and

talent will allow. All of us have access to the information which we need to make informed decisions. None of us has to be elite in order understand the issues current within our country. This is a very important gift from God and we need to praise Him for it.

God Almighty has also blessed our great country with the leaders, which we have needed in every era of time. “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, ‘Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,’ be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite” (Deuteronomy 17:14). We had superlative Founding Fathers at the birth of our nation. We had great men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison and so many others, to bring this great country into being. God gave us Abraham Lincoln to hold this country together in Civil War. God gave us William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt to lay the foundation for our modern world. God gave us Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman to confront and defeat the totalitarian powers in World War II. God gave us Ronald Reagan and George Bush to win and end the Cold War without going to war. We need to bless God for these great blessings.

The Lord is so very good to us. He has given us the best land, with the best weather, in the best location on earth. He blessed us with natural resources to power our prosperity. He blessed us with productive farmland so that we can eat to the full. He blessed us with the founding documents to secure our liberty, prosperity and protection. He blessed us with great leaders to guide our country into greater wealth and prosperity. He has poured out His promises to generations on us and our good land. We need to praise God. We need to have more regard for our Great and Holy God, who has set us above the other nations then praise Him for His goodness to us.



“In a loud voice they sang:

‘Worthy is the Lamb, who was  
slain, to receive power and  
wealth and wisdom and  
strength and honor and glory  
and praise!’”  
(Revelation 5:12).

# The Lord is Worthy

Jesus Christ is worthy. None of us is worthy. All of us were born with the desire to sin. Every last one of us chose our own way. God Almighty laid out for us in His Word, the Holy Bible, exactly what He wants for us. None of us could be bothered to obey Him. Even after we accept Jesus' atonement for our sins, we still don't want to do things His way. Jesus saved us from ourselves. He died to redeem us from death. He gave His life to secure ours. He took a beating which He did not deserve to grant us healing in our time of need. He sent His Holy Spirit to fill us, which makes us complete. He then uses His Spirit to lead us and guide us and teach us and heal us and empower us to defeat the sin in our lives. Jesus Christ gave us the Holy Bible. The Bible is filled with knowledge, learning and understanding; it spans many subjects, covers many eras of time, it reveals mysteries. Jesus Christ comes to us with His Presence. With His Presence, He comforts us, guides us, reveals mysteries, empowers us in trials and receives us to Himself.

All of us were born with the desire to sin. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Palm 51:5). Whatever happened in the Garden of Eden, it placed a desire to sin within the blood of every descendent of Adam. "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Genesis 3:6-7). The blood is not mentioned here, but evidently the desire to sin transfers through the blood. There seems to be more to this story than what we see from the story in Genesis, because it takes the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from sin. "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25). What is it about the blood of Jesus? It was free and clean of the desire to sin. Human blood comes from the father. Jesus' father is Almighty God; therefore, His blood is clean and free from sin.

If any person could be good enough to die in the place of another, they could only purchase one sinner from death: a life for a life. Jesus Christ was able to die one time and buy back all of humanity. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8). How could Jesus buy back all of us? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3). Because His death could redeem, or buy back, humanity from sin; He is our Creator. Our Creator died in our place. Knowing this should humble all of us. The Lord is worthy.

God Almighty laid out for us in His Word, the Holy Bible, exactly what He wants for us. None of us could be bothered with obeying Him. In the history of God’s people throughout time, we can see the examples of right and wrong, along with the consequences of both. In the first five books, God Almighty laid out the rules for human existence. A very simple set of elegant prose covering every essential thing in a human life. Those rules may have been given a very long time ago, but people haven’t changed. We are still animated by the same virtues and vices. Even though they were given so long ago, they are adaptable to our lives today. We can’t even write rules for our own time, how much less for all time? The Lord wrote them once forever. He is so worthy.

Even after we accept Jesus’ atonement for our sinning, we still don’t want to do things His way. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers” (1 Peter 1:18). We all live our lives in large measure by the customs and traditions of our families. How much of it is real? How much of it is in line with the rules in those first five books? We often times still don’t want to conform our lives to the Word of God. “Since you call on a Father



who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear" (1 Peter 1:17). Perhaps it is time to look at those examples in Scripture again to see whose customs and traditions that we need to adopt. As we learn this over a lifetime, we need to remember that Jesus Christ our Lord is ever so patiently guiding us. The Lord is ever so worthy.

Jesus saved us from ourselves. "But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:23-25). We have lost the concept of rejoicing. He saved us from our own hostility towards Him; He could have just dispensed with us over our ingratitude. Should we not show a little gratitude for His love and mercy? "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing" (Romans 7:19). Our problem is within. Jesus Christ is ever so merciful to continue working the sin, rebellion and wickedness out of us. We need to rejoice for His love and mercy.

He took a beating that He did not deserve to grant us healing in our time of need. "But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26). Even the Roman Governor found no fault in Jesus. "Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no basis for a charge against this man'" (Luke 23:4). Jesus was sent to be scourged anyway. For our healing He took that awful beating, which He did not deserve. "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). Our recovery is based on His wounds. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Do we praise Him every time we recover from illness? The Lord is oh so most worthy.

He sent His Holy Spirit to fill us, which then makes us com-

plete. “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 1:4-5). The Holy Spirit is the very essence of both Jesus and the Father. It is the seed of the Father to create us into the Father’s image. “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9). The Holy Spirit fills us, from the inside of our own human spirit, making us into a new creation. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). We were created to receive the Spirit of God. Once we receive it, we are a new creation in Christ. “Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Romans 8:14). This transformation into the sons of God is the purpose of a human life. This filling with God’s Spirit is what makes us complete. The Lord is fabulously worthy.

He then uses His Spirit to lead us, and guide us, and teach us, and heal us, then empower us to defeat the sin in our lives. “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31). The Holy Spirit not only fills us, it also empowers us to act. “Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say” (Matthew 10:17-19). Jesus Christ uses the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you” (John 16:13-15). The power of the Holy Spirit works healing among the members of the church. “To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of

healing by that one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:9). The Holy Spirit empowers us to defeat the sin in our lives. The result of the seed of God working in our lives is that we put away the sin and receive the renewing of our mind. “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24). The empowering of the Holy Spirit gives us the strength to overcome our own unique proclivities to take the wrong action. As we will allow the Holy Spirit to fill us from within, we begin to take the right actions over wrong actions. Who is this Great God who gives us His Spirit? Who could be more worthy?

Jesus Christ gave us the Holy Bible. “Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:10-12). It was the Spirit of Christ within the Bible writers that put the words to the pages. Do not the words: “the Word of the Lord” begin nearly every prophet’s book in the Bible? Of course they do! And the Word of God is...Jesus! “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1-2). The Bible is a book filled with knowledge, learning and understanding. The Bible spans many subjects, covers many eras of time and reveals mysteries. Have you ever derived any value from the Bible? Doesn’t it make you want to praise the Lord?

Jesus Christ comes to us with His Presence. If you have never experienced this, I kindly suggest that you get into a church that understands this and learn. If you have experienced this, how did it make you feel? “This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his pres-

ence” (1 John 3:19). My heart is always at rest in His Presence. “How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” (1 Thessalonians 3:9). There is pure joy in the Presence of the Lord. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18). He promised us His Presence and He frequently honors that promise. Of all the things about which to praise the Lord, His Presence has to be the greatest. What could possibly be more important to any of us than real time with the Lord? How much do you want to praise Him now?

The Lord Jesus Christ is oh most worthy. He took our sins and paid our price. He took a beating that He did not deserve in order to heal us of sickness. He fills us with His Spirit and blesses us greatly because of it. He empowers us to defeat sin. He gave us His written word, the Holy Bible and He comes to us. If you examine your own life you will find many times where the Lord has delivered you from trouble. He is worthy; let us praise the Lord.

# What is Good in Your Life?

It is so very easy to dwell on the myriad problems which beset us in our lives. The best place to start is to take pen and paper and list those things which are right in our life. What is right in your life today? Do you have a place to live? Is the place where you live furnished? Are the utilities on? Do you have food and clothing? Do you own a car? Is that car road-worthy? Many of us have a lot of things about which to praise God. We tend to take a lot of things for granted. This leads us to ingratitude for the things which we have. I work with Missions overseas. They often have none of those things. We take clean water for granted. Many places on earth in 2023 do not have clean, potable water.

Are we employed? Many times in my life I have been unemployed. We need to be grateful for employment. What if you need a better job? Praise God for the one you have and maybe He will grant you a better one! Most of us have food. Not only enough to merely get by, but plenty to spare. Weight loss in America is a big industry. That means many of us eat too much. This is a big blessing from God and we need to bless Him for it. “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:10). He promised us that we would eat until we are full; let every American bless God for that.

All of us came from a family. Do they talk to us? Then we need to bless God. If they do not, maybe we should praise God for them and perhaps set about some fence-mending. If you escaped an abusive relationship, then praise God that you got out.

A negative outlook seems to be the default setting in the minds of many. It takes more energy to be positive about our lives, than it does to be negative. One of the laws of energy is that it seeks the lowest possible level. We have to use our natural ability and energy to raise the positive outlook energy level in our lives. We do this by thinking about what is good in our lives. Positive thinking will lead us to praise God for the things

which we have, rather than complain about what we don't have. I am not saying that we should fail to work for a better life. I am saying that gratitude towards God for what we have will make us better people. I am saying that gratitude towards God for what we have may make Him more inclined to bless us with better. I am saying that gratitude for what we have will give us the stamina to work for better. In any case, gratitude will lead to a better frame of mind and lead to better results in our own lives.

Listing out what we have and what is right in our lives is the best place to start. That list is likely to be longer than you thought. Then list out the things in your life which make you happy. Continue on by listing the things that you know Jesus has done in your life. Maybe He intervened with a creditor, or on a job interview, or saved you in an automobile accident. List these things out. You will be amazed at what Jesus has done in your life. How often do we praise Him for those things? Are we still grateful, or once out of sight, is it out of mind?

For those things that make us happy, do we praise God when we get them? Do we praise God while we are enjoying them? Do we praise God while we are anticipating them? Of all the things over which we should be grateful, it should be over those things which make us happy.

Gratitude is how to open up a true relationship with Jesus Christ.

# Gratitude is How to Open the Relationship

Are we grateful? Too often we take our blessings from God for granted. We look at others and think we should be better off than they are. Rather than examine our own lives in order to praise God for what He has given us, we tend to look at others and long for more. This is not a healthy exercise. It is better to look into what is good in your own life, list them out and praise God for them. If some things need improvement, then write those things down as goals and take them to God in prayer. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God“ (Philippians 4:6). Thanksgiving, or gratitude, needs to accompany every petition. Meaning that we need to praise God first for the great things that He has done in our lives before we make new requests. Gratitude, or thanksgiving, should be a part of our every communication with the deity.

The God of all Creation has done a lot for us over our lives. We tend to forget most of it. It is a good idea to get a notebook and write down the things which God has done as you remember them. Our memories tend to bring things up randomly and then we forget them again. If we have that list handy, maybe we can get those memories onto paper before they fade out away. Have you ever been healed of an ailment? Has God ever stepped in and stopped a crisis in your life? Has a job presented just in time to avert disaster? Have you ever come upon a car wreck, knowing that you should have been there? God does all of these things for us over and over again. We have the need to praise Him for these things. He doesn't need our praise. We need to praise Him.

Our gratefulness is how to open a really good relationship with our risen Savior. “Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, ‘Jesus, Master, have pity on us!’ When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were

cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Rise and go; your faith has made you well'" (Luke 17:11-19). You see how Jesus was looking for some expression of gratitude for this great miracle. You can see this in many of the accounts of His miracles. People are basically ungrateful for the things that God does, whether big or small. We have to be grateful. In order to be grateful, we have to remember. Better yet, we should never forget the great things that God does in our lives.

Several times Jesus fed large numbers of people from essentially one person's lunch. After feeding 5000 at the beginning of John chapter six, Jesus leaves to go across the Sea of Galilee. The people find Him on the other side of the lake. You can see from His response to them that they were not grateful of this outstanding miracle. "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill'" (John 6:26). Did they not eat to the full? Food was not plentiful among the poor in that day. They were expectant of the miracle, but not grateful when they got it. Jesus was never pleased with their ingratitude. What makes us think that he will be pleased with ours?

Another time, a Centurion had a servant who was very sick and the Jewish Elders of that town sent for Jesus to lay hands on the servant to heal him. Before Jesus got to the house, the Centurion sent word to Jesus, to only speak the word. "He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: 'Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, 'I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel'" (Luke 7:6-9). Was it



only faith that Jesus couldn't find? Was gratitude also scarce? Does it seem to you that the Centurion was also grateful?

There are a few common words from which "thanksgiving" is translated in the NIV. "Toda" is a Hebrew word meaning: thank offering, thanksgiving, confession of thankfulness, thanks is the speaking of excellence of a person or object with a focus on the personal gratitude of the speaker. (From the Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance.) When we are "thanking" God, are we grateful? Do we really mean it? This word is used often in the Psalms. The Apostle Paul uses two words: eulogia and eucharistia. Eulogia means: blessing, praise, thanksgiving, the extolling of another. Eucharistia means: expression of thanks, thanksgiving, gratitude. You may recognize uses of these words already. It goes to show that we need to have more gratitude in our lives for the things which we do have.

David uses "toda" for thanking and extolling God in procession to go up to the Temple. "These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving (toda) among the festive throng" (Psalm 42:4). Thanksgiving, or "toda," as a way of extolling God from our gratitude as a form of worship. You can imagine the parades going up to the Temple with singing and dancing and music and praising. Maybe, in this great land of plenty, we should do this.

David was a musician. He wrote many songs of praise to God. Some of them are psalms in our Bible. "I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving" (Psalm 69:30). When we use a lot of praise songs, it seems everyone in the church gets happy. Praise songs are powerful. Praise songs will pull most everyone out of a melancholy mood. Praise songs are a good way to remember the great things that God has done in your life. Praise songs are a great way to inspire really good prayers.

In the Hungry Hearts Sabbath Service, we start the music portion of our service with praise songs. A verse in Psalm 100 is the reason why. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his

name” (Psalm 100:4). This is how we structure our service; enter His gates with our gratitude and His courts with our praise. The music portion of our service allows us to openly thank God from our hearts for how He delivered us from the past week. To be able to openly say out loud how He nurtured you, sustained you, and how He brought you through the week.

Many of us are talking about the seriousness of the times in which we live. Many of us talk about the increase in evil in our land. Our gratitude to God for what is good and what is right is a powerful tool to cope. “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). Keeping our minds on God is a powerful way to see His hand at work in our lives. “Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Ephesians 5:4). Our gratitude, or thanksgiving, is a great tool to overcome the evil that is all around us. Every time we praise God, the people around us will either join in or stop complaining.

Jesus uses the trials and tribulations of our lives to form the character of God within our spirit man. We need those trials, even though we do not like them. Sometimes, we suffer from bad decisions, or from saying something that was better left unsaid. Either way, the Holy Spirit can be used to turn that sorrow and sadness into joy. “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:6-9 ). We have to suffer grief in this life. When we do, it should be over our refusal to break the Commandments of God. But whether trial or trouble, we should, could and would use the power of the Holy Spirit to turn our pain into joy. Joy from grief is powerful. We can do this by

praising God for the good that exists, even in a bad situation.

God does many things for us in this life. It should not be hard to think about those things and praise Him for them. Jesus was not happy in times past for ingratitude and He is not going to be happy with us today over ingratitude. We need to show our gratitude by saying out loud our thanks for His many blessings. It is not that He needs to hear it--it is that we need to say it. We need to praise Him from our hearts.

“I will extol the LORD  
at all times;  
his praise will always be  
on my lips”  
(Psalm 34:1)

## Let's Start Developing Your Praise

When You are ready to praise God, what to do? Find a notebook, or a few sheets of paper, and let's examine how good God has been in your life. You may have already remembered a few of those things, which God has done for you. To get started, write them down in detail. Relax, keep this list handy because you will add to it many times as you remember more details. Every one of us came from a family of people. List their names and write down what is good with your relationship with each of them. Are you married? Write down everything that moved you to marry this person. Do you have children? Write down every good thing that they have done and every good memory that you have about them. I hope that you can see that God has blessed you much more than you thought.

How has God blessed you physically? Do you have a place to live? Do you own or rent? Is your home comfortable? What do you like about it? You were happy about it on the day you moved in--list the reasons. Do you own an automobile? What moved you to buy it? Is it still in good running order? Write these things down. What is the condition of your home and automobile? Do you keep them up? You can see God is real. He looks at how you take care of things. Your care and concern for your possessions is one of the things He evaluates to see if you are ready for better. Let me put it another way--how you treat His rich blessing in your life is your demonstration to God of your gratitude for His blessing.

What are some of the things in your life that you recognize God has done for you? Have you ever been healed of an ailment? Has God ever stopped, or altogether averted, a crisis in your life? Write these stories down in detail. You will quickly see that God Almighty is not some far away deity, but rather is very active in your life with you. Are you ready to acknowledge Him? Are you ready to praise Him?

When you pray, how do you approach the Throne of Grace? What is the name that you use? How do you articulate that opening phrase? Think on that just a little bit. There are many

great examples in the Bible of the great men of God and how they approached the deity. “I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: ‘O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands’” (Daniel 9:4). This was a great prayer and it was answered immediately. “O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below--you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way” (1 Kings 8:23). Another great prayer, by a great man of God, which God answered immediately. You can think about these opening phrases and build one of your own, in your own words, in the way that you speak. It has to be from your heart. “And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: ‘O LORD, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. ‘It is true, O LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands’” (2 Kings 19:15-17). God performed a super great miracle after this prayer. “Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you” (Nehemiah 9:5-6). These are praises before a prayer of repentance from sin. Look up the great prayers in Scripture and think about how they approached the deity. Work out your own personal way of approaching the Throne of Grace.

Another really good example from the Scriptures is that of Hannah. “In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, ‘O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head’” (1 Samuel 1:10-11 ). Hannah poured out her soul to the God of Israel (1 Samuel 1:15). Everything that we say out loud to the God of Israel needs to be from our heart. Maybe we should write our ideas on scratch paper then edit them a few times before committing them to a

draft. That is what I do; I work out my phrases on scratch paper before I begin to draft a praise. After you have pulled together a narrative from your own life of the great things that God has done for you, you will have a lot to draw on to construct your first praises.

We live in America, where we do not respect our leaders. (Often, they do not deserve our respect.) There are many examples from the Scriptures about how to approach a king. Jesus Christ is the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. Should we approach Him any less than a human king? “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently” (Acts 26:2-3). Paul is making an appeal to the King for mercy and makes his appeal using the King’s understanding of the Jewish people. Who is more merciful than Jesus Christ? “You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold” (Daniel 2:37-38). Daniel is appealing to the King’s sense of greatness to explain the interpretation of his dream. Who is greater than Jesus Christ? Who was truly given dominion and power and might and glory over everything on earth? We can see in these examples ways to approach a king. You are going to approach the King of Kings.

My “go to” phrase to open praise is this: “Adonai Yeshua ben Avi, Great and Glorious King of the Saints.” “Adonai” means Lord in Hebrew. “Yeshua ben Avi” means Jesus Son of the Father in Hebrew. This is my way to appeal to my risen Savior. This is how I acknowledge My King. Even so, you have to acknowledge Yeshua Messiah in your own way. Experiment and test various phrases, from your heart based on your thinking, to approach the resurrected Jesus Christ in both praise and prayer. Practice until you find that phrase that fits your personality, your way of thinking, your relationship with Yeshua and your way of speaking.

At Hungry Hearts Church we use these praises in a variety of ways. We praise Jesus for everything of value in our lives. How would you praise Him for your home? An example for that might be: “Great and Glorious King of the Saints who blesses me with this wonderful home, it is comfortable, convenient, easy to maintain, etc.” How might you praise Him for your car? “Great and Glorious King of the Saints who blesses me with this magnificent automobile, it is good on gas, it has run famously without repair, it handles well in bad weather, etc.” These are merely examples to help you get started. Once you begin to praise, your mind will open up and you will think of many more. As you practice, praise within the Bible will jump right off of the pages for you and give you many great ideas.

What about your family? I do not have your list of things that are right and good about them. Go over that list and write down praises about them using those opening phrases that you developed. Praise Jesus for their every good attribute. Additionally, this will help your relationships because you will see that the good outweighs the bad.

These beginnings are rough drafts. I use scratch paper to play with the subject-verb-object of my praises (and my prayers). Getting that first draft of your praises on to paper is important, there will be time to edit afterward. Those phrases will become your own unique way to pray. You have your own unique style even if you haven’t thought much about it. As you refine your words, you will become a much better and much stronger “prayer.” You will find there are many times you need to have praises handy.

It is important to list out the many good things about your life. It is important to list out the many blessings that God has given you. It is important to list out the many times God has intervened in your life. From these lists you can begin to formulate praises to God. Keep these lists handy. Praising God is addictive and you will use these lists often.





“Through Jesus, therefore,  
let us continually offer to  
God a sacrifice of praise--the  
fruit of lips that confess  
his name”  
(Hebrews 13:15).

# Praising

At Hungry Hearts Church, we open all services with both praise and prayer. On our Rosh Chodesh service, the new moon, we submit to Jesus more detailed prayers for the month ahead. On the Holy Days services, we submit even more detailed prayers for the season of the year and the condition of our lives. In both Rosh Chodesh and Holy Day prayers we include many praises. We use a lot of praise every time we pray. We also praise as a group, using both Hebrew Prayers and some unique to Hungry Hearts Church. Praising God in church on purpose--what a novel concept.

Last chapter we discussed drafting praises for the many things that God has done in your life. In this chapter, we will discuss how to use them to build prayers. The prayers we submit on both Rosh Chodesh and Holy Days are mostly based on our own lives. In these prayers, we include praises for many aspects of our lives. We praise God for what He has given us, for our families, for our occupations and for the blessings which He has bestowed upon us spiritually. To build these prayers we use the process of drafting, editing and refining our personal praises and requests to craft a prayer worthy of our King. During opening prayer and praise for our services, we offer praises based on our congregations and type of service, whether it be Sabbath, Rosh Chodesh or Holy Day. We praise God for the Word to be delivered, for the worship experience and for the fellowship. We praise God for our outreach efforts and for the guests who come from them.

We referred to Psalm 100, “enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise.” For the Hungry Hearts Service we added “opening praise” to go along with “opening prayer” at the start of our service. We have set up our prayers to begin with two paragraphs of praise. If you are ever tasked to open, with either opening praise or prayer, why not have one already written out? Why not think about the things which bless you at church and write out a praise? I keep one handy in case I am asked. I leave blanks to write in a few fresh praises unique to that day. I use the “barucha.” In Hebrew “Barucha ata Adonai

Eloheinu Melek ha Olam” means “blessed is the Lord Our God King of the Universe.” I include a few lines for: “Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melek ha Olam \_\_\_\_\_.” Then I only need to fill in the blank with a current praise. I keep several copies of these in my church bag. That way, I am always prepared and ready to praise God in the “opening praise.”

Several years ago, we added several Hebrew prayers to our service, most of which are praises. We say these together in unison. In some churches, they call it responsive reading. We select someone to present “opening praise,” and then “opening prayer,” after which additional Hebrew prayers follow. One of the reasons for using the Hebrew Prayers is to praise as one. We are all saying the same thing, at the same time, praising God in unison. Praising God is a big faith booster on Shabbat.

Rosh Chodesh means “new moon” and is the first day of each Hebrew month. On Rosh Chodesh, we write out prayers asking God to bless the new month. In those prayers we praise God for the good things from the month just completed and praise Him for the things we hope for in the upcoming month. Like we discussed in the last chapter, we cover many aspects of our lives. We include all God has blessed us to have, our families, our occupations, our health, and our personal growth in the Bible. In essence, we are offering to our King our life for the month past as tribute, along with a small monetary offering. Accordingly, we praise Him for the month past and the month to come.

For each Holy Day (found in Leviticus 23), we write out a prayer based on the characteristics of that day. In addition, we add in many of the items similar to those from a Rosh Chodesh prayer. The Holy Days fall in two groups: spring and fall. We set up goals and plans on the Feast of Trumpets, so Passover is like the half-time report. In my prayers, I focus on Passover at Passover, but I will praise Jesus for everything that has been good in my life since Trumpets. My most important focus is His death, burial and resurrection, but I still give My King an account for the first half of the year. At Pentecost, my focus will be on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the Morning

Star Rising in my heart. At Trumpets, I will bring my year before Jesus Christ for Judgment. On Atonement, I will focus my prayer on Jesus, making me “at-one” with Him. During Sukkot, I will praise and praise and praise. Sukkot is the time of rejoicing for the year past and for the year coming, so my prayers will reflect that in praise.

On the Feast of Trumpets, Jesus judges the world. Well, that means us. We bring Him our year for judgment. My prayers reflect that. I also praise Jesus for the good things in my life. Even in years when areas of my life did not go well, Jesus still made it a good year. I keep my Rosh Chodesh prayers and review them to create a really good prayer for Trumpets. I compile a goal list for the upcoming year and I use it to craft praises for the year to come. Gratitude is gratefulness for the things which we’ve been given. How can we be grateful, if we never look and consider?

In Exodus 23, a man is required to bring a Holy Day offering based on how he has been blessed by God. How do you know if you never look at what you have, or how your life has gone? In modern America, we forget everything nearly as fast as it happens. How has God blessed us? Surely we can’t rely on the daily drama to determine if God is/has blessed us?!? What about you? Will you look at your life to see where and how much God has blessed you? Let’s be specific, Jesus is your Lord--will you treat Him like one? Jesus is the One who either blesses you or doesn’t. Will you keep an honest accounting between you and Lord Jesus? Will you recognize what He is doing/has done in your life? Will you praise Him for it?

We start with a selected “pray-er” to say “opening praise” and “opening prayer,” after which we all praise God in unison with Hebrew prayers, and then everyone is free to praise individually during the worship. On the Holy Days everyone comes to the altar and says two or three lines of praise from our Holy Day prayer before Jesus as a part of making our offering. On the Holy Days we carefully built praises, which we call High Praise. The High Praise is built from the animal sacrifices to be made on each Holy Day. “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that

confess his name” (Hebrews 13:15). For example a bull, (some times two) was to be offered on every Holy Day. Originally, the Hebrew letter “aleph” was a pictograph of a bull, which in turn represents Elohim. (Aleph is the first letter in Elohim). Based on that, we put together praises to both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We put these praises together and say them in both English and Hebrew. The effect in the Holy Spirit is stunning. A group of people praising God for His greatness, mercy and love, in unison with resonance, is very powerful. The move in the Holy Spirit is tangible. This means that on every Holy Day, we are compounding within the Holy Spirit praise on praise on praise. Jesus said that He would answer our prayer of agreement. “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). What about our agreement on His praise? In another verse, God said that He inhabits the praises of His saints. “O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3 KJV). How much more, when we all praise Him together, with one voice and in agreement?

We have carefully thought out times to praise in our church services; some together, some privately and some said on behalf of us all. We praise God at many important times of the year. We praise God for things He has done recently and for important things which are milestones in our lives. Praising the deity with purpose, in unison in church, has been a thrilling spiritual experience.

# Celebration

We celebrate a lot of things in today's world. We celebrate sports teams, politicians, co-workers who retire, national holidays and local events. We celebrate special events which happen in our lives, such as an unexpected raise or promotion at work, the birth of our children, and family gatherings. What about the deity who operates the Universe and who cares for us so deeply? What about celebrating the deity who makes our special events happen? What about celebrating on those times when He has commanded a celebration?

What is a celebration? Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines celebration as "to perform a sacrament or solemn assembly publicly and with appropriate rites." This is not what we do at Thanksgiving. What do Americans do to celebrate? Americans play loud music, eat festive foods, dance and decorate the place where we celebrate. For larger celebrations, many times there will be a parade. Many of the local craftsmen will often display their wares, such as in a county or state fair. In ancient religious and military celebrations tribute was brought to the King. A real celebration is a big deal. Sadly, when it comes to God Almighty, too often we offer silence. Why are we silent about the deity who gives us life? Who blesses us to live in the USA? Who has provided for our every need? Should we not celebrate Him, at His proscribed times and in the necessary manner?

God calls His Holy Days "feasts." They are times to eat lots of festive foods. "Nehemiah said, 'Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength'" (Nehemiah 8:10). Often there were parades, "These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng" (Psalm 42:4). The people sacrificed many animals, which meant lots of barbeque. "King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted" (2 Chronicles 5:6). They sang

praises to God with many Levites playing instruments. “All the Levites who were musicians--Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives--stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang” (2 Chronicles 5:12-13). They shouted praises in unison. “They worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, ‘He is good; his love endures forever’” (2 Chronicles 7:3). Why then, are we so quiet? Modern life is not ancient life, but surely we can do better! We are blessed more than any of them could imagine. Could it be that we are simply not grateful for God’s rich blessing? I think that many of us are grateful; we have just been taught wrongly about the deity.

God tells us in the Bible to celebrate at several times in the year: Sabbath, New Moons and Holy Days. I came up in a church that observed these things, but didn’t really celebrate them well. Over the years, we have learned to do a little better at Hungry Hearts Church. Sabbath is from sundown on Friday night until sundown on Saturday night. We are told to stop working and congregate. The New Moons, or Rosh Chodesh, are the first day of every Hebrew month and we are told to celebrate on them in a way similar to a Holy Day. We are not commanded to stop working for New Moon, but we are told to observe it. Holy Days each have a unique theme and we are told to do certain things on each one. We are also told to barbeque a lot of animals and bring an offering. Should we not also bring tribute to our King?

The weekly Sabbath starts on Friday night at sunset. On Sabbath, we are celebrating for the week past and the week coming. On the Sabbath eve, Erev Shabbat, it is customary to have a little sweet wine and challah bread. At Hungry Hearts, we sometimes have a little Bible Study, but we always worship for an hour. This is a great way to start the Shabbat celebration. On the Sabbath, we enjoy services, which include praising with the Hebrew prayers, personal praise and prayer to open services, an hour of worship and a full length sermon.



On Rosh Chodesh, we use the offering portion of our Holy Day Service, with each of us praising and an hour of worship. We bring written prayers for the upcoming month. These prayers include substantial praises for the month past as well as praises about our hopes for the upcoming month. We also recite the High Praises in unison. We bring and present an offering, our tribute, to our King for the month. This is a powerful service. We schedule it at noon when it falls on weekdays, so that our working members can get their offering presented during their lunch break.

Every Holy Day is unique. Our Holy Days service is adapted to accommodate the uniqueness of each one. Even so, our main Hebrew prayers with their praises, our personal praises and our written Holy Day prayers are included every time. We also recite the High Praises in unison every Holy Day. We bring and present an offering, our tribute, to our King for the season of that Holy Day. On Holy Days we often have a catered meal, or eat together at the same restaurant. During Sukkot, we parade around the hall on opening night with our lulavim to dress the Succa. During Sukkot, we parade around the hall many times with different offerings each day with the Torah leading the procession. We choose to lift up Elohim and make their praise glorious.

The New Testament does not record how the early church conducted services. Our ancient forefathers were persecuted to death and all of their property was confiscated and their personal effects burned. “Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions” (Hebrews 10:32-34). How did they worship? How did they celebrate? The Bible records that many of the priests received Jesus and joined the church. “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the

faith” (Acts 6:7). What kinds of Temple services were brought in to the early church? What might that have been like? Building celebration, ceremony and praise into a modern church service took a lot of thinking about the ancient services assembled by Moses. Many church services are so quiet in the USA. The Bible records boisterous activity. How do we adapt for our lives in the USA?

Thinking out how to include praise in a modern Sabbath services, it seems that there should be time in the service for each person to be able to praise God for the things He has done in their lives. It seems that there should to be time for every person to openly say to God the things from their heart. It seems that there should be a public praise to God to which all can say “amen.” It seems that there should be praises to God in which all can join in together. It seems that these praises, prayers and worship should be lifted up to Jesus Christ like an offering. We think that we have blended these together in a novel and unique way. We believe that we have built these services in a way that fits within modern life.

We quoted Merriam-Webster’s definition of celebration: “to perform a sacrament or solemn assembly publicly and with appropriate rites.” What about redefining celebration as: to perform sacraments with joy, with a shout, with praises, individually and in unison lifted up as an offering? What about including in the definition of celebration: to rejoice over the several talents from God distributed among us as demonstrated in these works of art created by our members? What about including in the definition of celebration: to publicly parade around with the great blessing God Almighty has poured into my life this week/month/year? What about including in celebration: to feast together for and with the praise of God?



“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross”  
(Colossians 2:15).

# Conclusion

Praising our God shatters demonic power. We don't live on earth alone and we never have. There are many adversaries to human beings in the spirit realm. When we give a "hallel," or a shout of praise, it shatters their world. (The Hebrew word "hallel" often includes shouting.) God Almighty disembodied demons in judgment fire. Praise to God reminds them of their defeat. Praising God reminds them that Jesus Christ is returning.

Praising God, especially for the things which He has done in our lives, reminds us that He is still God. All of us forget too easily that God is with us. We should recount the mighty deeds God has done in our lives to build up our faith in God.

Demons work on fear. God works on faith. Praise stops our fear. Praise builds up our faith. We win on both accounts, stopping fear and building faith. The more that we praise God, the more we will believe in Him and His great power to work in our lives. The more that we recount God's great acts in our lives, the more powerfully we will believe that He will act on our behalf. The more that God intervenes in our lives should draw more praise from us towards Him.

Prayer is based on faith. The better that we believe God, the more often that we will pray and the more things we will take to God in prayer. God already knows what we need; He never needs our requests. In fact, He often acts to deliver us and provision us completely unbeknownst to us. He does many things for us about which we are completely unaware. Prayer makes us aware of what He is doing for us. Prayer draws our attention to our various needs and His answers. Then we can better see His hand at work in our lives. Prayer puts us in contact with Jesus Christ over the issues which animate our lives.

Praising God makes us look at Him. Praising God takes our eyes off of ourselves, our problems and our opponents. Who wins in the end? Jesus Christ wins. Praising Him takes our minds off of momentary and trivial losses and refocuses our

attention that we are with the God who wins. Praising Jesus Christ is our most effective weapon against discouragement, despair, and depression. We can shout down our problems with effective praises to Jesus Christ. We can shout down our spiritual adversaries by recounting Jesus' fantastic victories over them. Praising Jesus puts them down by extension. We are not aware of everything that has occurred between Jesus Christ and His spiritual adversaries, which means we do not always realize how effective our praise to Jesus really is. Jesus Christ is a victorious King who will destroy the power of our adversaries. Jesus Christ will protect us from our enemies. Our praise to Him is open acknowledgement that we understand His power and love. We can improve our relationship with Him with praise and celebration. He is worthy to receive our best.



## Praise the Lord O My Soul

Explore Praising God from Your Heart

Learn How to Take the Love in Your Heart  
and Craft Praises Worthy of Your King

Learn How to Use Gratitude to Overcome  
the Stress in Your Life

Explore Ways of Praising God Almighty in  
Church Services

Take a Look at Celebrating God Almighty  
with Great Joy



Pastor Bill Shults oversees three churches and administers Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson TN. He has written twelve books on how to have a closer walk with Jesus Christ.

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