

Praising God Quiets Our Fears

Message 01 of 03 in the series: "Power of Praise"

A. Some helpful information:

1. Praise = expressing to God our admiration and understanding of His worth; recognizing the wonderful aspects of His divine nature

Halal = praise (ancient Hebrew) throughout the OT = to boast/brag, to shine, to glorify

Halal (praise) + Yah (the Lord's name, "Yahweh") = Hallelujah = Praise the Lord!

2. Praising God is NOT an optional activity. Throughout the Bible, God's followers are commanded to praise Him.

We are to praise God individually. "Let all that I am praise the Lord; **with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name**. Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me."

Psalm 103:1-2 (NLT)

We are to praise God together. "Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. **Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his**. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name." Psalm 100:1-4 (NLT)

Life Application: We can tell a lot about our relationship with God by listening to how we praise Him. "A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart." Luke 6:45 (NLT)

B. King Jehoshaphat showed us the importance of praising God while we're facing a difficult situation.

"Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, 'A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar.' ...Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. So people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the LORD's help." 2 Chronicles 20:2-4 (NLT)

1. Praise reminds us of who God is. "Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. He prayed, 'O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you!'" 2 Chronicles 20:5-6 (NLT)
2. Praise reminds us of all God has done for us. "O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name." 2 Chronicles 20:7-8 (NLT)
3. Praise reminds us of God's promises to help us. "They said, 'Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us.'" 2 Chronicles 20:9 (NLT)
4. Praise reminds us that we are weak, but God is strong. "O our God, won't you stop them? We are powerless against this mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help." 2 Chronicles 20:12 (NLT)

Life Application: Praise brings us peace because it focuses our attention on God instead of ourselves, our problems, or our circumstances. "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!" Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

C. God accepted Jehoshaphat's praises and answered his prayer.

"As all the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their little ones, wives, and children, the Spirit of the LORD came upon one of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel... He said, 'Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for **the battle is not yours, but God's**.'" 2 Chronicles 20:13-15 (NLT)

1. Praise reminds us that God is always doing more behind the scenes than we comprehend. “Tomorrow, march out against them... But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD’s victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!” Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, worshiping the LORD. Then the Levites from the clans of Kohath and Korah stood to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud shout.” 2 Chronicles 20:16-19 (NLT)
2. Praise increases our faith (ability to trust God.) “Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and said, ‘Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed.’ After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: ‘Give thanks to the LORD; his faithful love endures forever!’ At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them... King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder... There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all! On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, which got its name that day because the people praised and thanked the LORD there.”
2 Chronicles 20:20-26a (NLT)

Life Application: Praise is a powerful weapon we can use in the spiritual battle for control of our minds. “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)

D. Three simple things we can do that will help us praise God while facing difficult situations:

1. We can create a praise list of characteristics of God which we can say to Him in prayer. “I will tell of the Lord’s unfailing love. I will praise the Lord for all he has done.” Isaiah 63:7a (NLT)
2. We can create a playlist of Christian praise songs we can sing to God. “Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!” Psalm 147:1 (NIV)
3. We can praise God with others. “Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord...” Ephesians 5:17-19 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions:

Read 2 Chronicles 20 and then discuss the following questions:

1. What is your favorite hymn/song of praise?
2. Why do you think some people attending our worship services feel comfortable singing out while others are reluctant to do so?
3. Discuss the following reminders we get from praising God:
 - Praise reminds us of who God is.
 - Praise reminds us of all that God has done for us.
 - Praise reminds us of God’s promises to help us.
 - Praise reminds us that we are weak, but God is strong.
 - Praise reminds us that God is always doing more behind the scenes than we comprehend.

Have you experienced any of them recently?

4. How does praising God help us in the spiritual battle we fight for control of our minds?
(Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

5. React to this statement: "We can tell a lot about our relationship with God by listening to how we praise Him." (Luke 6:45, Isaiah 26:3)
6. Discuss "My Praise List" (available in the bulletin & at centeringlives.com). What are your three favorite characteristics of God from this list?
7. Spend some time as a group praising God by proclaiming His praises or by singing a simple praise chorus together. (Ephesians 5:17-19)

My Praise List

"O Lord, I praise you because You are..."

all-powerful. (Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:27)

all-knowing. (Psalm 139:1-3, Isaiah 46:9-10)

everywhere. (Proverbs 15:3, Isaiah 66:1)

eternal. (Psalm 90:1-4, Revelation 1:8)

creator of everything. (Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:15-17)

great. (Deuteronomy 10:17, Psalm 95:3)

good. (1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 100:5)

patient. (Numbers 14:18, 2 Peter 3:9)

forgiving. (Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 103:8-14, 1 John 1:9)

unchanging. (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8)

love. (Psalm 136, 1 John 4:7-10)

always with me. (Joshua 1:5-9, Psalm 23:4)